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The Nation.

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EDITORIAL

UPHEAVAL IN COLOMBIA

Absolutism in the defense of authority is no virtue. Colombian President Belisario Betancur Cuartas's decision to storm the Palace of Justice in Bogotá, where guerrillas held scores of hostages, succeeded in wiping out most of his nation's top judiciary, along with much of the M-19 movement's leadership. It did nothing to heal historic political divisions or eliminate the causes of opposition and insurgency, which have rent the country for three decades. After the assault, Betancur justified his action: "The government cannot negotiate what is nonnegotiable, such as the respectability of our democratic institutions." Antiterrorist absolutists around the world applauded, but when the smoke lifted, it was hard to find much respect or democracy left in the institutions of Betancur's Bogotá.

The trouble with an absolute policy of nonnegotiation, such as President Reagan is pursuing toward the kidnappers holding Americans and others in Lebanon, is that it isolates the authorities from political realities, where the settlement and resolution of a situation can be found. The policy itself arises from a theory that is abstracted from politics, which is like detaching war from diplomacy. Wise leaders are obliged to explore every avenue of diplomacy to avert conflict or resolve it when it erupts. Wise politicians should do no less when civil strife threatens their own institutions. There is always time—as there was in Bogotá—for the gratifying massacre after the meeting is over.

Betancur had tried mediation and compromise before, and although that path was popular, it did not satisfy the powerful right or the radical left. Of course, he was personally affronted by M-19's violent gesture, but his choice of violence was an admission of democracy's failure rather than an act of democratic defense.

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OPPOSITION ACCORD

CHILEANS ARE GAINING ON PINOCHET

CYNTHIA BROWN

On September 11, Chilean flags were draped in black in Santiago's slums and shantytowns. It was the twelfth anniversary of military rule, with no end in sight. Nonetheless, Chile was beginning to recover from the eight-month state of siege that the government of Gen. Augusto Pinochet ended in mid-June. Indeed, if anything, the opposition was more optimistic in September than at any time since national protests began in 1983. And subsequent events, including a major slowdown protest on November 5 and 6, underscore the opposition's new strength.

Two new elements have revitalized Chile's democratic movement. A political murder case this March galvanized popular protest and, through a judicial inquiry, has shaken up the police force. Also, an August call for the restoration of democracy by eleven right and center-left parties has lifted the nation's spirits and reopened debate on how to mobilize for a change of government. Symbolizing the new mood, on September 18, Pinochet found himself looking across the nave of Santiago's cathedral at opposition leaders who, for the first time in twelve years, had been invited to attend the National Day mass. And for the first time in twelve years he was looking at a possible alternative to his rule.

The state of siege imposed on November 6 of last year, combined with earthquakes this March, had effectively paralyzed the protest movement [see Brown, "The Opposition Is Off Balance," *The Nation*, April 13]. Blaming a "terrorist" threat, but in fact responding to the *paro* ("work stoppage") of Oc-

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LETTERS.

THE MARCH OF FOLLY

Cos Cob, Conn.

May I have the courtesy of your columns to comment on the controversy about Joan Peters's book *From Time Immemorial*, in which you have referred to me and have published a letter from me to a private individual, presumably obtained from him [Alexander Cockburn, "Beat the Devil," Oct. 19]. Its publication in *The Nation* without prior notice to or consultation with me seems an odd departure from normal journalistic practice. As you no doubt know, physical possession of a letter legally resides in the recipient, but publication rights legally belong to the writer. A worse deviation from the norm, I think, is the deception practiced on your readers by failing to identify any of the persons whom you quote in the controversy as committed and long-term apologists of the Palestine Liberation Organization.

Sir Ian Gilmour, who initiated the correspondence, has been joint chairman of the Council for Advancement of Arab-British Understanding, known as C.A.A.B.U., oldest of the Arab lobbies in the United Kingdom. He has been described in the *London Sunday Telegraph* of March 2, 1980, as displaying, when he was editor of *The Spectator*, "a vehement partisanship in the Palestinian dispute, taking the Arab side, in the eyes of some of his critics, to the point of fanaticism."

Alexander Cockburn, whom you take as another authority, is an admitted paid agent of the P.L.O., having acknowledged, as reported in *The New York Times* of January 12, 1984, accepting a $10,000 grant from the Institute of Arab Studies, an offshoot of the P.L.O. and its most active propagandist in this country. When this fact was revealed, Cockburn, according to *The Times* of January 17, 1984, was suspended indefinitely, without pay, from his position as a staff writer for *The Village Voice*.

Edward Said is identified by you as a professor of English at Columbia University, which he may be for all I know, but is it not more relevant for your readers to know that he is the most prominent and articulate member in the United States of the Palestine National Council, a policy-making body of the P.L.O.? When his book titled *A Question of Palestine* was reviewed in *The New York Times*, the reviewer described it as "unashamed advocacy for the author's [namely the P.L.O.'s] cause." A full-page ad in *The Times* at about the same time, sponsored by "The Ad Hoc Committee in Defense of the Palestinian and Lebanese People," included Said as a signer, and when the post office box of the sponsor was investigated it proved to be in the name of Said's wife, Marian. I do not know what exactly the cost is of a page in *The Times*, but I believe it approximates $25,000 to $30,000.

Surely it would have been appropriate to inform your readers about these connections of the contributors whom you have chosen to discuss a matter so important for public policy. *Barbara Tuchman*

If we were wrong in accepting Sir Ian Gilmour's presumption that by sending a copy of her letter to an editor, Barbara Tuchman had decided "to make [the] correspondence public," we regret the false presumption. We do not, however, accept her proposal that we should stigmatize our contributors by incendiary and prejudicial labeling.

Alexander Cockburn's column appears every other week in The Nation*; therefore, we see no need to identify him. If we did, however, it would be inappropriate to identify him by a fellowship he received some years ago from an institute that, although no longer in existence, was a U.S. nonprofit foundation, registered with the appropriate authorities. To misrepresent that circumstance as P.L.O. agentry is the sort of bad history from which one would have thought a popular historian such as Tuchman would want to dissociate herself.*

Edward Said has been a member of Columbia University's department of English and comparative literature for twenty-two years. Since 1976 he has attended two meetings of the Palestine National Council, of which he has on occasion been openly critical. Those unfamiliar with Said's political commitments, about which he has been consistently outspoken, were surely put on notice by the reference early in his essay to how Peters's project strikes "those of us [Palestinians] who have memories of communal life in Haifa, Safad, Jaffa and Nazareth." We cannot and should not, of course, identify our contributors by the advertisements they or their spouses sponsor, any more than Tuchman should be expected to identify herself by the advertisements she may have signed or organizations to which she may belong.

Such ad hominems merely divert attention from the important issue Cockburn and Said have raised: the integrity (or lack thereof) of the research in Joan Peters's From Time Immemorial. *The Editors*

EVER VIGILANT

Princeton, N.J.

I should like to add to Frank Donner's excellent October 12 article, "The Return of the Red Squads" an open letter about my recent personal involvement as a victim of F.B.I. harassment in violation of my First Amendment liberties.

On September 17, as I was preparing to leave my summer home on Cape Cod, I received a telephone call from an F.B.I. agent. He told me the Bureau had a record of my having visited the Bulgarian Embassy in Washington in June, and asked that I please tell him what the purpose of my visit was and what we discussed.

I responded candidly that I had been invited to lunch with the Bulgarian Ambassador at his residence. He had been requested by his Cultural Ministry to thank me appropriately for my having repatriated, as a gift, several paintings acquired by my late husband in the 1920s. In recent years, the painter has been accorded recognition as a master in Bulgaria, and a special museum has been erected for the display of his works. For me, the gracious occasion was truly an honor.

Upon reflection, I decided that the F.B.I. inquiry was an improper intrusion into my personal social activities. American citizens have the constitutional right of association with other individuals, and our own government has been encouraging person-to-person exchanges with citizens of other countries. I am also a freelance journalist and historian, and in pursuit of my professions have need to talk with and interview whomever I please under my First Amendment rights.

Since it is unrealistic to assume that anyone breaking American law or contemplating breaking the law would give honest answers to the F.B.I.'s questions, what possible law-enforcement value could such an inquiry have, save harassment?

I believe this event is instructive as regards the lengths to which the F.B.I. would go nowadays, in the light of spy disclosures and terrorism on a world scale. To safeguard our constitutional liberties, we must be ever vigilant. *Sylvia E. Crane*

EDITORS' NOTE

On September 28 we published a letter from Professors Serge Lang, Murray Protter and Abraham Taub. Professor Lang now complains that the letter was edited without permission. In fact, for reasons of space, we omitted three sentences written in German, their translation and other material that seemed either marginal or repetitive. We regret that ellipses were not used to indicate those cuts. Readers interested in obtaining a copy of the original letter should write to Letters to the Editor, *The Nation*, 72 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10011.

DANTO'S AWARD

We are pleased to announce that Arthur C. Danto has won first place in the Manufacturers Hanover Art/World Awards for Distinguished Newspaper Art Criticism in the category of art history.

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EDITORIALS.

Delayed Justice

As a bleak judicial winter begins to descend on the land, a Federal judge's decision to overturn Rubin (Hurricane) Carter's murder conviction glows like a late liberal light in the gloaming. In many jurisdictions these days, defendants' rights are so little regarded and the sentiment for revenge is so strong that judges barely blink at prosecutors who suppress evidence, lawyers who raise racist arguments or police who coerce witnesses. Such practices were at issue in Carter's case, but New Jersey District Court Judge H. Lee Sarokin met them head on. "The need to combat crime should never be utilized to justify an erosion of our fundamental guarantees," he wrote in a painstaking and persuasive seventy-page opinion. After almost nineteen years in prison, Carter was free.

The case had its origin in the racially tense atmosphere of Paterson, New Jersey, in a time marked by violent community confrontations. On June 17, 1966, two men and a

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woman were shot and killed outside a bar in that town. A few hours later, Carter, who was a leading middleweight boxing contender, and a companion, John Artis, were arrested because they were driving in a car that resembled the one in which the two gunmen had allegedly fled. At the trial in 1967 the prosecution offered no motive for the slayings, but two witnesses—local hoods who were admittedly in the act of committing a burglary at the time—said they saw Carter and Artis with guns drawn at the scene. Both defendants got life.

Seven years later the burglars recanted their testimony, saying they had been coerced by detectives. A state court overturned the convictions after hearing evidence, suppressed at the time of trial, that the prosecution had promised one of the witnesses favorable treatment on his burglary charge. But after a few months of freedom, Carter and Artis were hauled in for a second trial. One of the burglars had recanted his recantation. To strengthen the state's otherwise flimsy case, the prosecutor developed a motive for the murders: random racial revenge. The theory was that Carter and Artis went cruising for white victims in retaliation for the shooting, earlier in the evening, of a black tavern owner they had known.

No evidence for such a startling supposition was entered into the trial. Nothing in Carter's or Artis's background suggested that they were likely to make random race war, and no one testified that it was their plan or intention. But by 1976, when the second trial took place, white paranoia was running high. Paterson had experienced a particularly explosive racial uprising in the wake of Martin Luther King Jr.'s assassination. If racial revenge was in the air, it emanated from the white community, and the charge against Carter and Artis looked like a classic projection of white fear. A jury of ten whites and two blacks convicted the men again.

Hurricane Carter was no angel. At the time of his arrest he had a police record for robbery and attempted assault dating to the 1950s, and he presented a formidable appearance with his shaved head and dashiki, which was *de rigueur* for militant blacks twenty years ago. But as Judge Sarokin suggested in his decision, citizens are not supposed to be imprisoned for appearance or affect:

> Underlying the prosecutor's theory and summation is the insidious and repugnant argument that this heinous crime is to be understood and explained solely because the petitioners are black and the victims are white. Without this unacceptable assumption, the prosecution's theory of racial revenge becomes a thin thread . . . of largely irrevelant evidence and impermissible inferences.

Case closed? Not so quickly. Having failed to convince Judge Sarokin that Carter is a dangerous and vengeful criminal (Artis was paroled in 1981) and should remain incarcerated, the New Jersey authorities announced that they would appeal the Federal Court's ruling and, if necessary, try Hurricane Carter a third time. And they might well get a third conviction, for there aren't many judges as humane and courageous as Sarokin sitting in the cold, conservative light of this day.

The East's Summit

No group will be paying more attention to the summit than the leaders of the Warsaw Pact countries. They hope the meeting will mark the beginning of a new period of détente.

The reasons are economic and political. During the cold war of the 1950s, there was little interest in trade with the West. Trade spurted in the 1970s, in harmony with détente. But in the 1980s, Eastern economic needs for trade with the West are in conflict with political relations.

"We are at a delicate stage of development, an economic turning point," said Peter Hardi, deputy director of the Hungarian Institute of International Relations. "We lack a lot of the means required." High technology and the capital to implement it are available only from the West, he said. "Now we need especially good East-West relations."

Hardi hopes better relations will lead to a liberalization of the NATO coordinating committee list, the roster of Western products that the United States and its allies refuse to trade to the East. A superpower agreement would also allow these countries to establish the longer-term East-West economic relations necessary for their planned economies. And East Germany, Czechoslovakia, Poland and Bulgaria would like to have most-favored-nation status, which has been granted only to Hungary and Romania.

Détente would also reduce the ideological barriers to trade on the Soviet side. Witold Lipski, deputy chair of the foreign relations committee of the Polish Parliament, told me, "In a good international atmosphere, proposals of cooperation between the G.D.R. and West Germany would not be regarded as having a tendency for dividing the socialist camp, undermining its social situation or serving as a tool in the global fight between socialism and capitalism."

The Eastern bloc countries also see a political benefit from détente: the space to maneuver vis-à-vis the Russians both in internal politics and foreign relations. "When East and West are in confrontation you even have to ask your treaty organization if it is convenient to go to Italy to visit the Pope," said Dieter Weigert, a research associate of the Institute for International Relations. "This is a coalition, so we have to listen." Polish officials hold a similar view. Wlodzimecmierz Natorf, director of international affairs for the Communist Party, said: "We believe that when East-West relations improve, more possibilities will be open to us. Every small or medium country has more room for active participation in world affairs when there is a dialogue. When there are tensions, only power counts."

Liberals in Communist institutions share the views of dissidents that détente could lead to more political as well as personal freedoms. Lipski said: "Détente is a prerequisite for liberalization. When [former Prime Minister Edward] Gierek had special relations with Chancellor Helmut Schmidt or President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, we couldn't have political prisoners."

LUCY KOMISAR

Lucy Komisar recently returned from Eastern Europe.

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Guatemala Votes

Guatemala City

On November 3 Guatemala's military regime staged the first round of presidential elections designed to transfer power to a civilian government. The winner of the first balloting, Christian Democrat Marco Vinicio Cerezo Arévalo, is expected to defeat runner-up Jorge Carpio Nicolle of the National Centrist Union in the December 8 runoff and take office in January as the country's first civilian president since 1966.

Following the voting Gen. Oscar Humberto Mejía Víctores, the incumbent chief of state, announced his satisfaction with the results at a press conference in the National Palace. He also took the opportunity to denounce the Mutual Support Group (GAM), an organization of relatives of the "disappeared," charging it was "organized and orchestrated from . . . Washington, D.C., by international totalitarian organizations." Mejía Víctores was asked about the death of two of the group's leaders: Rosario Godoy, who was abducted from a shopping center, raped and maimed; and Héctor Gómez, who was kidnapped and found with his tongue cut out. The general took a drag on his cigarette and explained that Godoy had perished "in a traffic accident." As for Gómez, "Who knows how he died?" Seated on the President's right was his Chief of Staff, Col. Julio César Ruano, head of El Archivo, the special agency for dealing with political dissidents, and a key behind-the-scenes backer of Cerezo.

Ruano is a member of the Guatemalan Military Academy's class of 1960, which, together with a coterie of majors from the class of 1970, backed Cerezo from the start. Many of the old guard generals supported Carpio Nicolle until Cerezo humiliated him in a debate. A week before the elections Cerezo circulated what he said was a memorandum from military intelligence predicting a Christian Democratic victory on the strength of the party's ties with the army and the United States. Cerezo also received money and a benediction from Cacif, the coordinating body of the Guatemalan oligarchy. In return, he pledged to oppose agrarian reform, calling it "a horrible error."

The election comes at a crucial time for the Guatemalan military and the business community, which recently had their first fundamental clash of interests since the 1954 C.I.A.-sponsored coup installed the first of a series of army governments. For years military regimes kept order in a starvation-wage economy that featured the lowest taxes and highest profit rates in the world. In the early 1970s, the officer corps decided to build its own economic base by dipping into the government treasury. The emergence of a powerful guerrilla movement necessitated costly counterinsurgency measures. The result was economic chaos, as government expenditures rose a staggering 600 percent between 1973 and 1981. Most of the increase was paid for with high-interest short-term loans. More recently, unable to impose taxes on a recalcitrant oligarchy, the military regime has taken to financing itself by deflating the quetzal and depriving Guatemalan businesses of nearly three-quarters of the hard currency value of agricultural and industrial exports.

In contrast to other ailing Third World economies, the crisis of Guatemalan business has a relatively clear solution. As Cacif aptly notes, stretching out the payments on the country's short-term debt would free up more than one-third of its hard currency earnings, strengthen the quetzal, undercut inflation and encourage renewed growth.

The main obstacle to such a solution is Guatemala's image, blackened by what presidential candidate Alejandro Maldonado Aguirre, of the conservative National Renovation Party, described as "a reign of official terrorism," which has claimed up to 100,000 civilian lives since 1978. The present regime presumes that the election of a civilian president will change that image, enabling Guatemala to renegotiate the loans and receive increased U.S. economic and military aid. "The army may well fare better under a Christian Democratic presidency," says U.S. State Department consultant César Sereseres. "The civilian government will have more access to international credit and be in a stronger position to line up foreign support."

Although Cerezo pledges to eschew land, tax and public service reforms and says he has "absolutely no intention" of bringing officers involved in repression to trial, he is considered to be on the left of the officially tolerated spectrum. That is because of the Christian Democrats' traditional reformist stance; their status as the historic opposition, never participated in a governing coalition; and Cerezo's own outspoken opposition to the atrocities committed by the regime of Gen. Fernando Romeo Lucas García, from 1978 through 1982. Since 1982, however, Cerezo and the party have moved sharply to the right. When Gen. Efraín Ríos Montt was in power, for example, Cerezo tirelessly denied that army massacres in the highlands were in accord with government policy.

Cerezo has been harshly criticized by the relatives of the disappeared for inattention to their demands. When GAM occupied the Metropolitan Cathedral on October 31 they called on Cerezo to press the military for news of their loved ones. Even after Cerezo's impressive electoral victory, General Mejía Víctores did not return his calls.

Cerezo has a genuinely popular following and is recognized as a man who would not willingly initiate repression against political dissidents. Whether he would have any choice is another matter. Archbishop Próspero Penados estimates that the civilian president will hold between 20 and 30 percent of the power, with the rest in the hands of the military. Cerezo's election would surely loose an outpouring of demands for justice and economic redress, which, because of the pledges and the alliances that he has made in pursuit of the presidency, Cerezo would be hard pressed to meet. If the people go unsatisfied, if disorder and dissent return to the streets and the hillsides of Guatemala, Cerezo's military and oligarchic sponsors may then step forward and liquidate their political investment.

ALLAN NAIRN

Allan Nairn is a journalist who writes frequently about Central America.

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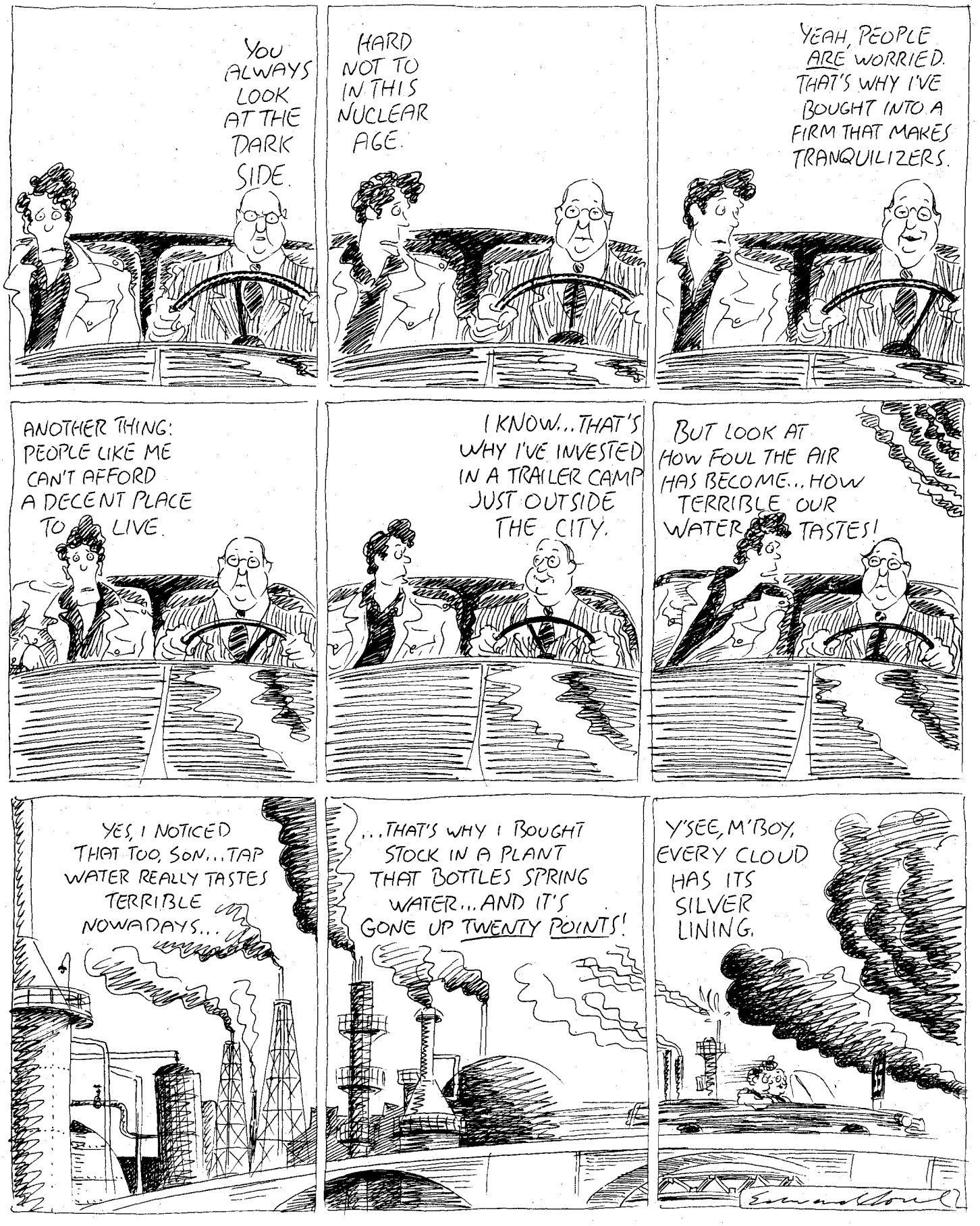
Investment Strategies

EDWARD SOREL


YOU ALWAYS LOOK AT THE DARK SIDE.
HARD NOT TO IN THIS NUCLEAR AGE.
YEAH, PEOPLE ARE WORRIED. THAT'S WHY I'VE BOUGHT INTO A FIRM THAT MAKES TRANQUILIZERS.
ANOTHER THING: PEOPLE LIKE ME CAN'T AFFORD A DECENT PLACE TO LIVE.
I KNOW... THAT'S WHY I'VE INVESTED IN A TRAILER CAMP JUST OUTSIDE THE CITY.
BUT LOOK AT HOW FOUL THE AIR HAS BECOME... HOW TERRIBLE OUR WATER TASTES!
YES, I NOTICED THAT TOO, SON... TAP WATER REALLY TASTES TERRIBLE NOWADAYS...
...THAT'S WHY I BOUGHT STOCK IN A PLANT THAT BOTTLES SPRING WATER... AND IT'S GONE UP TWENTY POINTS!
Y'SEE, M'BOY, EVERY CLOUD HAS ITS SILVER LINING.

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MINORITY REPORT.

CHRISTOPHER HITCHENS

A candidate for enlistment in a British military academy was once asked to define the role of cavalry in warfare and replied that it lent tone, dash and color to what would otherwise be a vulgar brawl. Much the same maxim must now be held to apply to the House of Windsor, apex of a crumbling and rancorous British class system and occasional decorative camouflage at white trash binges in Reagan's Washington.

Last week the British Embassy sent me a packet of photographs, biographies and briefings, all of them tending to the view that the visit of the Prince and Princess of Wales to the glitz-infested table of Ron and Nancy Reagan was our finest hour. The envelope contains a handout titled "The Monarchy," which opens like this:

> The British people look to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II not only as their head of State, but also as the living symbol of their nation's unity.
>
> The monarchy is Britain's oldest secular institution. During the last thousand years its continuity has only once been broken (in the Cromwellian period from 1649 to 1660) and, despite interruptions in the direct line of succession, the hereditary principle upon which it was founded has always been preserved.

On October 30, I went to a crowded and enthusiastic meeting at the New School for Social Research in New York City. The topic was the meaning of history, and the four speakers were Christopher Hill, Eric Hobsbawm, E.P. Thompson and Perry Anderson. If I recited all the claims and titles (none of them hereditary) of those four Englishmen I would absorb a great deal of scarce newsprint. Among them, they have done more to recover hidden history, and more to reinterpret what has been taken for granted, than any other remotely comparable constellation of writers. Their work is antithetical to the view that the Cromwellian period was a mere interregnum in a glorious line of succession. The English Revolution against "the divine right of kings" was the first time in history, as Hill said at the New School, that a monarch was made to answer to his people in public. The resulting Commonwealth was the most extraordinary period of innovation in science, politics and the arts that the old country ever witnessed. Its ideas and example predate the revolutions of 1776 and 1789. It deserves better than the contemptuous relegation that it gets in the embassy handout.

That pamphlet was obviously designed for pseudo-monarchists and snobbish Americans, else it would not have insulted the intelligence of the reader by describing the Queen, who is head of the church as well as head of the state, as "secular." My wonder is that so many people in the United States should be so credulous, so self-abasing and so incurious as to fall for this essentially Tory view of history. It's easy to see why the Reagans, the Zipkins and the Bloomingdales are such suckers. Their tawdry universe of easy money and bored, vicious distraction can use a coat of paint and a borrowed plume or two. But why is there such widespread deference even among Democrats, journalists, editors and what might be called ordinary, levelheaded people?

An accidental clue may have been supplied by Joseph Kraft in a recent syndicated column, "The Myth of British Importance." Kraft prides himself on a certain immunity from the Washington courtier culture and on his adherence to the sturdy republican virtues. He inveighed against the royal fever that has infected the nouveaux riches and the so-called smart set in their pursuit of legitimacy. As he perceptively put it, "Having failed to fuse wealth and responsibility in our own country, we borrow prestige from an aristocracy we can buy."

That's a fair encapsulation. But Kraft pushes his argument too far by suggesting that many of America's imperial embarrassments are the responsibility of the British connection. "Defaults by Britain . . . account for much of the United States' foreign policy trouble in the post-war period," he writes. "American power has long since supplanted the British fleet as the shield of independence in Latin America." And that's not all:

> In addition this country has had to pick up the British baton in North Asia, the South Pacific, the Indian subcontinent, the Persian Gulf, the Middle East and the eastern Mediterranean. We are now in process of replacing Britain in southern Africa. Perhaps in the western Mediterranean too.

Kraft thinks that by becoming an empire, the United States was doing the British, and everyone else, a big favor. Just as British schoolchildren were once taught about the white man's burden, so now we read, gurgling with mirth if we can avoid bursting into tears, that "American power" is "the shield of independence in Latin America." And what thanks does the United States get for all its trouble? Just like the subjects of Britain's lost dominion, the new generation of natives is sullen with ingratitude.

It's perhaps just as well for Kraft that the United States has no "special relationship" with Spain, Portugal, Belgium or Holland, on which responsibility for its reluctant inheritance of the Philippines, Angola, Zaire and Indonesia might be blamed. Let's admit that he has a point, though, in stressing the peculiar symbiosis that exists between London and Washington. No other government in the world is so willing to echo the American line, or to submerge its own former commitments in a larger American design. This collusion extends even to nuclear matters, with the British having less control over their "own" missiles and bombs than do the Israelis, the South Africans, the Pakistanis, the French and other minor-league members of the plutonium genocide club.

In point of fact, the United States went to some trouble to acquire the British Empire. The Monroe Doctrine, to give an obvious example, was intended specifically to exclude the crown from South America. In Palestine, Cyprus, Egypt and elsewhere, the Churchillians and post-Churchillians were rudely supplanted by Roosevelt, then by Acheson and Dulles. Perhaps it was inevitable that America would hanker after the outward pomp, form, show and style as well.

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CAPITOL LETTER.

KAI BIRD AND MAX HOLLAND

This is the first installment of a biweekly column on Washington. Our "Dispatches" writers have come home; they'll be looking for neglected or suppressed stories here.
—The Editors

■ Secret Computer Czar

The Reagan Administration came a step closer to the Official Secrets Act it has always lusted after when the President signed National Security Decision Directive 145 in September 1984. The classified directive gives the National Telecommunications and Information Systems Security Committee (N.T.I.S.S.C.) sweeping powers to regulate access to all computerized information in government agencies.

Eighteen of the twenty-two committee members come from the military and intelligence communities. National security adviser Robert McFarlane oversees the program, and the national manager, who serves as executive secretary of the committee, is National Security Agency director Gen. William Odom. The group's permanent secretariat is staffed by the N.S.A. and housed in N.S.A. facilities. N.S.D.D. 145 gives Odom the authority to examine government telecommunications, data banks and word processing systems. He can monitor them as long as he first alerts "the heads of the agencies, departments, or services concerned," and he can decide what information is national security "sensitive," even if it's unclassified.

The directive also authorizes military and intelligence officials to "encourage, advise, and, where appropriate, assist the private sector" in identifying "sensitive non-government information, the loss of which could adversely affect the national security."

Congress didn't find out about N.S.D.D. 145 until a concerned bureaucrat leaked an unclassified version. Hearings were held in June and earlier this fall on the Computer Security Act of 1985, sponsored by Representative Dan Glickman. The act would remove the powers from the N.S.A. and give the National Bureau of Standards, a far more open agency, "sole authority and responsibility" for computer security in the Federal government.

Under Glickman's bill the N.S.A. would still set the standards for computer security inside the defense and intelligence communities. But a new committee, composed of four representatives each from the private sector, public interest groups and the government (including one N.S.A. member), would determine what information, classified and unclassified, should be protected. However, chances of a vote this year are slim because of more pressing legislation.

Assistant Secretary of Defense Donald Latham shed light on N.T.I.S.S.C.'s interpretation of the word "sensitive" when he told the House Subcommittee on Legislation and National Security that it might include personnel records of Federal agencies as well as crop forecasts from the Department of Agriculture. A.G.W. Biddle, president of the Computer & Communications Industry Association, argued that the directive could give N.S.A. access to such data as Social Security records. "This new category of protected information may have boundaries," said Biddle, "but they are only discernible to the authors of N.S.D.D. 145."

In effect N.S.D.D. 145 is a piece of legislation issued by the White House. As Representative Jack Brooks points out, "It was drafted in a manner which usurps Congress's role in setting national policy. . . . the corridors of the Pentagon and . . . the east wing of the White House are not places in which national policy should be established."

■ Lugar's Loophole

The press has reported that on October 24 a Senate vote blocked President Reagan's proposed $1.9 billion sale of sophisticated aircraft to Jordan. But a close reading of the debate suggests that the Administration has pulled a procedural fast one.

Although seventy-four Senators had indicated that they opposed the sale, they wound up passing by 97 to 1 a compromise: the sale would be prohibited until next March 1 "unless direct and meaningful peace negotiations between Israel and Jordan are under way." Most senators thought they retained the prerogative ultimately to veto the arms package if the condition is not met. Yet a loophole in the compromise might allow the Reagan Administration to proceed with the sale.

The architect of that resolution is Senate Foreign Relations Committee chair Richard Lugar. Since taking over the chair from Charles Percy in January, Lugar has assumed an assertive role in foreign policy, and the Administration has increasingly come to depend on him in key votes. On October 23, Lugar met with Senators Robert Dole, Edward Kennedy and Howard Metzenbaum. Kennedy and Metzenbaum agreed to Lugar's compromise. And after these strong opponents of arms sales to the Arab world had signed on, Minority Leader Robert Byrd had no problem recommending the resolution to his Democratic colleagues.

The next day Lugar presented the resolution on the Senate floor insisting that "no senator is giving away any rights today." Not convinced, Christopher Dodd explained that he was concerned that there was no assurance that the Senate could reject the arms package if peace talks haven't started by March 1 and offered an amendment requiring a February vote. Without this, Dodd pointed out, "one senator here could filibuster" a resolution forbidding the sale past the March 1 deadline.

Lugar refused to accept the amendment, and both Lugar and Dole refused to guarantee Dodd a pre-March vote. Dole promised only not "to stand in the way" of such a motion, while Lugar explained that "I do not know what the parliamentary situation is likely to be at that point." Dodd fears that "we have left the barn door open and we will come to regret it."

Ramming the arms sale through on March 1 would cost President Reagan a great deal of political capital, but it is an open secret that opposition to the sale is far weaker than the seventy-four votes against it on paper. Many senators would be happy to avoid a direct vote on the issue.

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ARTICLES.

LETTER FROM TEXAS

The Gibber Wins One & Other News

MOLLY IVINS

Austin

Summer's going to end any week now, as South Texas temperatures dwindle slowly out of the 90s, and none too soon, let me add, because it's been a real bastard. You could tell as far back as April it would be brutal: the Legislature ran more than usually amok, passing all manner of anti-Bubba laws. Bubba has to buckle up now and all this other bushwa. Thank God it's still legal to drink while driving.

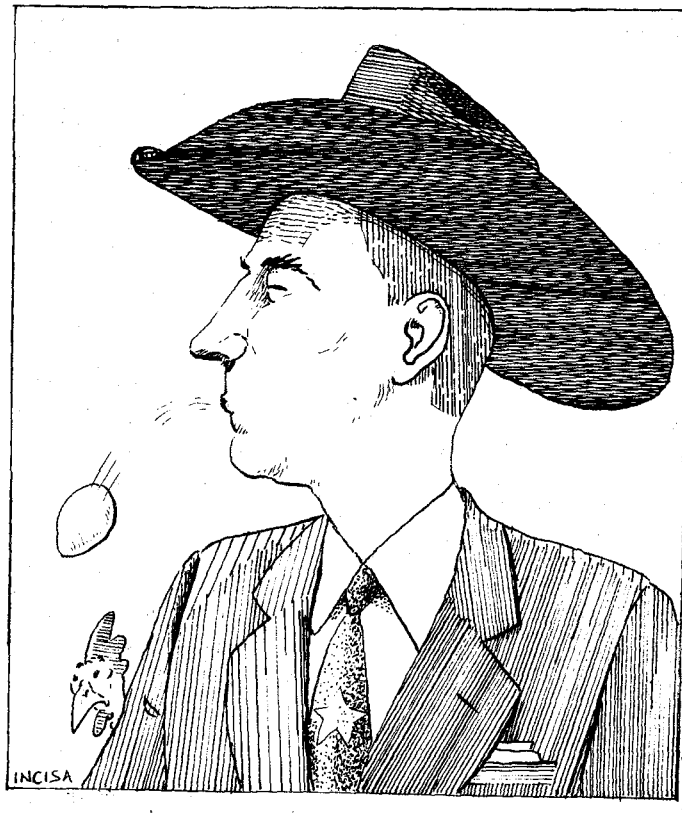
By May the Lege had screwed things up so bad they had to be called back in special session. The most depressing thing about the Lege these days is that it has Republicans in it. Most of them are mean-mouth Republicans, too. Warren Burnett, the distinguished legal counselor from Odessa, always advises you should never let anyone on a jury whose mouth puckers smaller than a chicken's asshole. You look at those statehouse Republicans and near every one is mean-mouthed like that, mean-dispositioned too. They had a snit because the Democrats came up with an indigents' health care plan, which means we're not going to let poor folks die in the streets anymore. The Republicans and the mean Democrats almost defeated the bill; it came down to a tie vote in the House and Speaker Gib Lewis, a man we seldom think of as a hero of the people, had to break the tie.

It's possible that the Speaker is smarter than we think he is, but it's hard to tell because he can't speak English. Sometimes you listen to him fighting to express himself—valiantly trying to battle his way out of a sentence while surrounded by dangling modifiers, mismatched predicates and loose clauses—and you have to feel compassion. The Gibber's greatest moment this session came on Disability Day, which we have every year to honor the crippled folks for their efforts to get better access to public buildings. We never give them any money for this, but we honor their efforts to get it. Anyway, the Guv issued a proclamation, both houses just resoluted up a storm and Gib Lewis read all of it without making hardly any mistakes. We were so proud. Then he looked up at all the crippled folks in the gallery and said, "And now, will y'all stand and be recognized?"

After the session, the Gibber thanked all the members for extinguishing themselves and left for South Africa. This had nothing to do with politics. Gibber likes to shoot harmless animals, preferably rare ones, for fun. It's his major passion in life. Some nit-pickers criticized him for letting the South African government pay for the trip, but he came back and said out loud, clear as anything, "Those people over there have a lot of problems," which made everything jake.

In July the twinkies on the State Highway and Public Transportation Commission took leave of their senses and announced a new slogan for our license plates: "Texas: The Wildflower State." Bubba hated it. Fifty-six State Legislators signed a letter of protest against it. Representative Jim Rudd said, "I don't want to be the Wildflower State and I don't want to be the Gay Rights State either." The commission finally backed down. Bob Lanier, the chair, said, "I got the idea the slogan was probably not adequately macho." All this led to a pleasant summer vogue for thinking up great license plate slogans: "Rhode Island: Land of Obscurity." "Oklahoma: The Recruiting Violations State." "Maine: Home of George Bush."

Texas Democrats are enough trouble. Why the hell anyone ever thought we needed two political parties down here is beyond me. Over in the First Congressional District, much of July was devoted to proving that we don't. Thanks to Senator Phil Gramm, who is always busier than an anthill what just been stepped on, the last Congressman from the First is now on the Federal bench, so we had to elect a new one. The Republicans decided this was a test run for 1986 and sent platoons of consultants, image-makers, fund-raisers and assorted experts down to Texarkana—which serves them right. Their headquarters looked like I.B.M., all shiny and telephones with lots of buttons and such. The Democrats were working on card tables again in back rooms where the ceilings were falling down. How come Democrats keep thinking they can win when they're being outspent three to one? It's dumb.



DRAWINGS BY MONICA INCISA

Molly Ivins is a columnist for the Dallas Times Herald.

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Anyway, the Republicans had a terrific candidate, name of Edd Hargett. (One of those experts discovered that people with double letters in their names are considered more reliable by voters.) Edd Hargett has great hair and he not only played football, he was quarterback for Texas A & M. The Democrat was Jim Chapman, who is seriously bald and otherwise just your average Texas D.A., a guy who has devoted the best years of his life to making sure that perps who stick up liquor stores do life in prison. (Which reminds me, a perp in Lubbock got seventy-five years this summer for stealing sixteen frozen turkeys, which is fairly strong gargle given that all sixteen turkeys were recovered, still frozen. Not only no damage but no defrost and the guy still bought 4.7 years a bird. Don't ever steal a turkey in Lubbock.) The Republicans put up billboards all over saying, "Vote for Edd Hargett, a Congressman in the East Texas Tradition." This annoyed the Democrats: never been a Republican elected in East Texas before. So the Chapman people went around putting bumper stickers that said "Republican" on Hargett's billboards. The Hargetts called the Chapmans to complain their billboards were being "defaced." This made the Chapmans very happy.

Chapman is the guy who discovered that trade policy is an issue, which is why you too are now being bored to hives over it. Actually no one in East Texas gives a rat's ass about it either, but Hargett was dumb enough to say he didn't see what trade policy had to do with jobs in East Texas. (This view can be easily explained: he went to A & M when Phil Gramm taught economics there.) When Lone Star Steel shut down its plant two years ago, it threw 4,000 people out of work. When Hargett and Chapman had their big television debate, Chapman brought along a "Vote for Edd Hargett" gimme cap and showed the audience the tag on it—said, "Made in Taiwan." Them Republicans may have a lot of buttons on they phones, but they still asleep at the wheel. Chapman won with 51 percent.

August brought a wondrous event, a peace demonstration in the Panhandle. It's not easy to be for peace in Texas. A while back there was an article in *The New York Times Magazine* about New York intellectuals, which was one of the funniest things I ever read. An intellectual named Norman Podhoretz was quoted complaining about the "dominant liberal culture." To prove that liberal culture is indeed dominant, Podhoretz inquired indignantly, "Have you ever met *anyone* who was against a nuclear freeze?" Lord, I haven't laughed that hard since the Governor held a press conference to announce he wasn't crazy. I love New Yorkers, they're so provincial. Bubba's pickup has a bumper sticker that says, "Freeze Now, Fry Later."

Anyway, all the pinko peace lovers of Texas—that's about seventy people out of 16.4 million and most of 'em from decadent places like Houston and Dallas—went up to Borger on the occasion of the fortieth anniversary of the bombing of Hiroshima. Borger is near Amarillo and Amarillo is near what looks like a girdle factory but is actually the place where nuclear warheads are manufactured. So here's a bunch of peace lovers camped in a ditch outside a nuke factory in the middle of August in the middle of the Panhandle. And the good people of Carson County already figured peace lovers were crazy.

The chief thing about peace people is that they're earnest. For three days they prayed a lot, sang folk songs and held seminars on nonviolence in order to prevent nuclear war. Local fundamentalists came by in a truck with a bullhorn every day to tell the peace lovers that peace does not come through disarmament; it only comes when you let Jesus into your heart. One peace lover, Dr. Larry Egbert of Dallas, thought it would be nice for all the peace folk to give blood to the local blood bank. Blood banks're always desperate for donors and this would show that the peace folk are just against nukes, not against the people who make their livings building the bombs. Well, it would have been a cordial gesture, but the Amarillo blood bank rejected their blood. The director told Egbert, "We don't want to get involved in politics." (He later took blood from those who came into town but still refused to send out a bloodmobile.)

At the end of the camp-out, the most hard-core nonviolents of them all—a menacing horde of nine vegetarians, Unitarians and Quakers—went to sit on the railroad track to stop the "white train" from coming out the nuke factory. That was Against the Law. Trespass, in fact. There's not that much excitement in law enforcement work around Borger, so we had the entire Carson County Sheriff's Department, Borger City Police Department, Highway Patrol and Santa Fe Railroad security guards gathered there to see that the Quakers didn't commit mayhem. We all standin' around in the blazin' hot sun in the middle of your typical Panhandle scene—flat as a griddle, not a tree for 600 miles and everything is one color: dry. Suddenly from out the nuke factory come two black four-wheel-drive vehicles, racing across the prairie, bouncing into the air, whip antennas a-lashin' behind 'em; it is the nuke plant security force. They screech to a halt by the tracks and all hop out. They are wearing jungle camouflage. They are ready to Rambo, lookin' to kill communist revolutionary terrorists. But there's only nine Quakers sittin' on the railroad tracks and none of them has seen *Rambo*. They all went to *Gandhi* instead. That's the trouble with this country, people keep messin' up each other's movies.

What else is new?

§ It's illegal to be gay in Texas again, thanks to the Fifth Circuit. They reinstated our sodomy statute, so people can legally screw pigs in public but not each other in private.

§ Mad Eddie Chiles, one of our better loopy oil zillionaires, is mad again and has taken to the airwaves to tell us about it. All he wants is for the government to LEAVE HIM ALONE, he does not want anything from gummint, except the depletion allowance and the write-off for intangible drilling costs.

§ We're having a football scandal that's so rank it might slop over into politics, which is real embarrassing.

§ Waco, the Vatican City of the Baptists, has hired a P.R. firm for a quarter of a million bucks to "give Waco a more glamorous image." More?

The *dernier cri* for rich Texans is giving money to the *contras* so they can overthrow the Sandinista government of

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Nicaragua. And it's tax deductible, too. Ms. St. John Garwood of Austin gave $50,000 to buy a chopper for the *contras*, but they're only going to use it for humanitarian stuff, like on *M*A*S*H*, says Ms. Garwood. Buy your own little battalion of freedom fighters; it's a lot kickier than the Cattle Barons' Ball. Why give money to cure cancer when you can kill Commies with it instead? Maj. Gen. John Singlaub, retired, who now heads the U.S. Council for World Freedom, the outfit that channels money to the *contras*, says he gets about half his gelt from Texas. Bunkie Hunt was at the general's last do in Dallas. It's a bizarre concept: the Pentagon, a United Way Agency. What can I tell you? We just have a lot of tacky billionaires. □

THE REGISTRATION STRATEGY—II

How to Get Out The Vote in 1988

RICHARD A. CLOWARD AND FRANCES FOX PIVEN

The unprecedented voter registration campaign of 1982-84 ended in a class stalemate, as we reported in *The Nation* in the first part of this article, "Trying to Break Down the Barriers," on November 2. About 7 million people were registered, half of them by well-funded Republican and Christian-right drives aimed at middle- and upper-middle-class whites, the other half by nonpartisan drives focused largely on the poor and members of minority groups. Any future campaign is also likely to end in a standoff because the right can draw on a reservoir of 20 million unregistered voters from the middle class to match the left's efforts among the 40 million unregistered poor. The solution is to reform the voter registration system so that low-income citizens can participate more easily. But a realistic reform strategy must confront the entrenched opposition of the national political parties, neither of which wants the electorate expanded from the bottom.

The voter registration movement thus confronts a dilemma. To produce a representative electorate requires registration reform, but traditional approaches to reform depend on mustering legislative majorities. Past efforts to win Congressional support for an automatic registration system were soundly defeated, and the prospects of success are clearly no better now. Legislative action at the state level is also unlikely. A handful of states do permit people to register on Election Day, and those states show turnout levels 10 to 25 percent above the national average.

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In the spring of 1983, we established the Human Service Employees Registration and Voter Education Fund (Human Serve) to promote reform by executive action, hoping thereby to circumvent the problem of assembling legislative majorities. With Hulbert James, Human Serve's first executive director, we tried to persuade Democratic governors, county executives and mayors who depend on low-income and minority voters to issue executive orders directing public employees to offer to register citizens applying for services at government agencies. This would make it possible to register in welfare and unemployment offices, Medicaid and food stamp recertification centers, or in libraries and departments of motor vehicles.

We also hoped to convince executives in the vast nonprofit health and welfare sector, which includes 125,000 agencies offering direct services, to provide registration at reception desks. We thought these agencies might welcome the opportunity to register their clients, since it would be a way of protecting their programs and budgets. Some agencies, such as settlement houses and day-care centers, had done it in the past, so the idea was not entirely new.

If widely adopted, agency-based registration would be similar to the British and Canadian door-to-door canvassing. Nearly everyone has contact with public and voluntary agencies in modern society. Poor people and members of minority groups especially have contact with health, housing, welfare and unemployment agencies. Moreover, if agency-based registration were to spread, it could help create the constituency for national voter registration reform along European lines. As mentioned, Congressional incumbents oppose reform for fear that a wave of new, unpredictable voters would hurt their re-election chances. But if registration levels rose, they would no longer have reason to resist comprehensive reforms, which would merely ratify what had already occurred.

The Human Serve approach was quickly endorsed by the National Association of Secretaries of State, the National League of Cities and the National Black Caucus of State Legislators, as well as by thirty national organizations of human service personnel and agencies. Those thirty groups publicized the idea, and Human Serve's field staff worked with their local affiliates to implement it. Schools of social work were often helpful, encouraging their students to press for the development of voter registration services in the agencies where they interned and calling meetings of agency executives in their communities to promote the campaign.

More important, between March and September of this year, Human Serve helped obtain six gubernatorial executive orders permitting registration assistance in state offices. The Governors of Texas, Ohio, New York and Montana directed that such services be provided by all agencies; in New Mexico and West Virginia they limited the services to public welfare offices. Governor Rudy Perpich of Minnesota publicly endorsed the plan but did not mandate it. Orders were also issued in two dozen counties and cities, including such metropolitan centers as Austin, Texas; Newark; Dayton, Columbus and Cleveland, Ohio; Portland, Oregon; Miami and Tallahassee, Florida. There were

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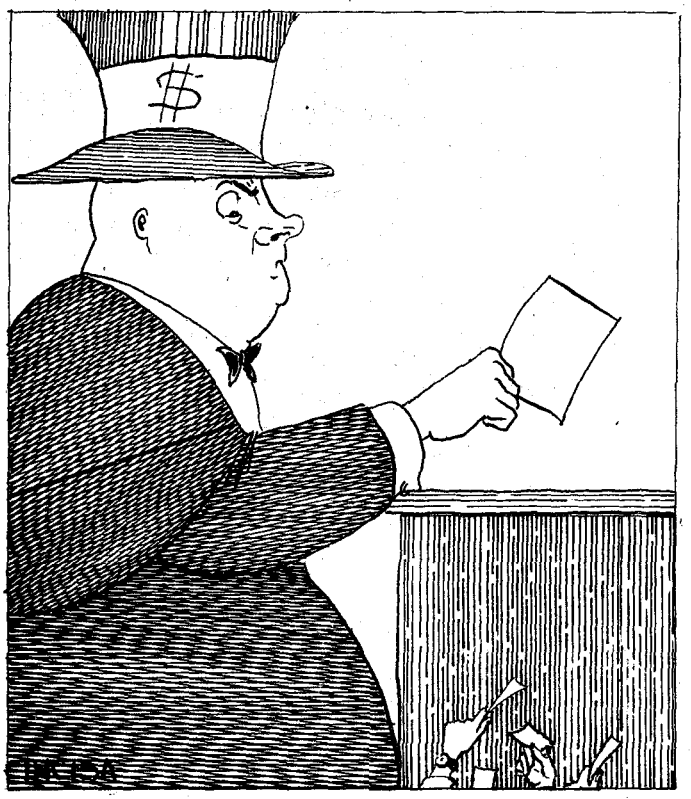
even some legislative victories. Washington, Florida and Maryland passed bills directing state employees to offer to register citizens.

Human Serve found allies among public officials and voluntary service organizations. Richard Celeste's executive order in Ohio was promoted by Secretary of State Sherrod Brown. The New Mexico order resulted from the work of Joseph Goldberg, a former professor of social welfare who headed the state's Department of Human Resources under the newly elected Governor, Toney Anaya. The orders in Texas and New York were won by coalitions of human welfare service organizations and labor unions. The state A.F.L.-C.I.O. was extremely helpful in Texas; and both Victor Gotbaum and Norman Adler of District Council 37 of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees were crucial in New York, as were political leaders Ruth Messinger, Herman Badillo and Carl McCall. The West Virginia order was issued by the head of the state Human Resources Department, Leon Ginsburg, who was also president of the American Public Welfare Association.

During a two-week period just before the close of registration in October, Governor Mario Cuomo's executive order was implemented in employment offices throughout New York State. Approximately 2,500 postcard registration forms were completed and deposited in boxes; another 17,000 were taken home, with what result we do not know. In Ohio, where forms were made available in state agencies, including state liquor stores and lottery outlets, 59,000 completed forms were returned during the months of August and September alone.

Finally, 1,500 health and welfare agencies nationwide offered registration services at their reception desks. By the close of registration in October, they had signed up 325,000 people. Agencies serving women were the most active: Y.W.C.A.s registered 100,000; Planned Parenthood, 80,000. Another 50,000 were enrolled by the Children's Foundation, the National Abortion Federation, women's health clinics and day-care programs. The remaining 90,000 were registered mainly by health facilities, such as community health centers, mental health centers and centers for the disabled. In New York City, thirty-five hospitals participated, and contributions by *Nation* readers and others enabled Human Serve to register about 1 million people in all.



Those achievements came rather easily. The gubernatorial orders in Ohio, New Mexico and Montana were stimulated by articles in *The New York Times* and the wire services describing the agency-based strategy. It is revealing that five of the six governors who issued executive orders in 1984 were elected on the upsurge of popular participation in the midterm elections of 1982. The Democratic Party, therefore, is not monolithic. There are Democratic politicians who depend on voters from the bottom, and some were willing to promote voter registration reform.

But Human Serve, with little political influence, was relatively defenseless in the face of the inevitable backlash its initial success provoked. In New Mexico, for example, both political parties were outraged by Governor Anaya's order, which they saw as a ploy to register poor Hispanics, and it was rescinded. In Texas, where State Department commissioners resisted Governor Mark White Jr.'s order, implementation was sluggish and the Human Serve state coalition was not strong enough to prod the Governor to crack down. Shortly after those orders were issued, and with a few months to go before the November election, the Reagan Administration's director of personnel management threatened to cut off grants-in-aid to the states if the tiniest fraction of those funds was used to pay the salaries of employees engaged in registration. In response, Governors Cuomo, White and Celeste adopted what they called a "passive" approach. Voter registration tables were placed in waiting rooms, but federally funded state employees were instructed not to pass out cards or answer questions. The Reagan attack also halted implementation of the Florida Legislature's agency registration bill. Following a critical report issued this past spring by a Congressional committee headed by Representative Barney Frank, however, the Administration retreated. In September it informed the Governors: "We conclude that no substantial evidence of a pattern of misuse of state employees in violation of federal statutes has been found. This constitutes our final judgment in the matter and no further action is planned." As for the voluntary agencies, many of their executives were reluctant to act, fearing that business and industry leaders on their boards would withhold contributions or that local political leaders would sabotage their grants and contracts.

Spreading, defending and monitoring implementation of an executive approach to registration reform will require a broad-based national coalition, including human service organizations (especially public-sector unions), the tradi-

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tional voting rights and legal defense community, the nonpartisan voter registration organizations that mounted the 1982-84 campaigns, and religious, peace and women's groups. Human Serve's experience suggests that more governors, county executives and mayors would act if backed by such a coalition.

Employees of public and voluntary agencies would also be responsive to appeals from such a coalition because many of them already identify with those organizations. Teachers, social workers, public health workers, nurses and other human service workers make up the largest occupational groupings in civil rights and peace organizations. Similarly, women's organizations draw a substantial proportion of their members from the 70 percent of public and voluntary social agency staff who are female. Media events, newsletters and rallies that appeal to agency workers in their dual identities and give them a sense of being part of a larger movement would help overcome their timidity.

Finally, a national voting rights coalition could call for direct action against election officials who refuse to deputize agency staff members and volunteers. So far, most of the deputization lawsuits brought have been lost. No judge has agreed that the right to register is constitutionally protected. Consequently, election boards do not have to claim that they have a compelling reason when they refuse to deputize volunteers or to arrange for registration cards to be widely distributed; they are free to act capriciously. This would not be the first time a rising tide of protest was necessary to modify the judicial climate. In sum, an electoral mobilization from the bottom could be spurred by a national movement modeled after the civil rights movement's tactics of mass civil disobedience, litigation and lobbying.

Will people vote, and will they vote their interests when they gain the franchise? Some public opinion polls show little difference between the attitudes of nonvoters and voters, class differences between them notwithstanding. Polling, however, reflects the systematic isolation of poorer and minority people from the political culture. Ironically, that isolation helps produce the apathy and alienation to which low voting is then attributed. What surveys cannot reveal is that voting percentages and political attitudes would change if leaders bid for the allegiance of new voters from the bottom by articulating their grievances and aspirations. Constituents can influence leaders—and vice versa, as Jesse Jackson's campaign reminded us. Even Walter Mondale would have run a different campaign if he had been forced to contend with millions of new voters from the bottom.

Party leaders and their business allies have always understood the dangers of an enlarged lower-class electorate. That is why working-class people were electorally demobilized on the eve of the industrial takeoff a century ago, through new voter registration procedures and eligibility requirements. Had that not happened, industrialization would have proceeded differently. Labor would have been stronger, Jim Crow would not have been institutionalized, economic disparities would have been less extreme and welfare programs would more nearly resemble those in Western Europe. Unless there is a remobilization of voters from the bottom, on the eve of another economic transformation, the American political economy will be as distorted in the future as it has been in the past. □

RAINBOW WARRIOR AFTERMATH

A Nuclear-Free South Pacific

PETER VAN NESS AND
CAROLYN M. STEPHENSON

Auckland, New Zealand

"You can't sink a rainbow!" proclaims a button put out by the environmental group Greenpeace to protest the July 10 bombing of the Rainbow Warrior in Auckland harbor. The rainbow of the slogan could also stand for the hope of the peoples of the South Pacific that nuclear testing and the dumping of nuclear wastes can be stopped.

On November 4, two French army officers pleaded guilty to charges of manslaughter and arson in the terrorist bombing of the Greenpeace flagship and the killing of photographer Fernando Pereira. The case has become a *cause célèbre* and has aroused widespread condemnation of France's atomic tests at Mururoa atoll. The growing antinuclear sentiment in the region was also manifested recently in New Zealand's ban on nuclear-powered and nuclear-armed ships and the signing of the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone (S.P.N.F.Z.) treaty.

Those events confront the Reagan Administration with a critical choice. Will Washington accommodate the antinuclear concerns and the aspirations for regional autonomy in the South Pacific? Or will it use its many means of political influence to coerce the nations there into reverting to the pre-treaty status quo? The tests of its intentions will be in how it reacts to New Zealand's ban on nuclear ships and whether it accedes to the protocols of the S.P.N.F.Z. treaty.

In interviews with peace activists, academics and members of Parliament in Wellington and Canberra—the capitals of New Zealand and Australia, respectively—we found a broad spectrum of opinion. Arching across the shades of difference, however, is a consensus on the need to limit the extension of nuclear activities in the Pacific and to expand thinking about arms control.

The S.P.N.F.Z. treaty was drafted in August on Rarotonga, one of the Cook Islands, by the thirteen-country

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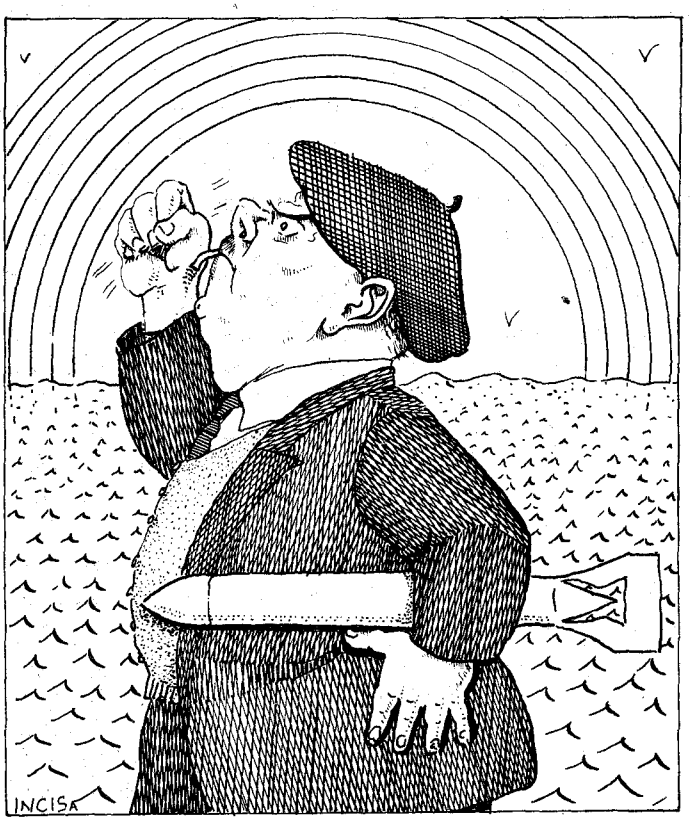
South Pacific Forum, which promotes regional cooperation on economic and political matters (only Vanuata failed to agree to the document). The pact is the result of a ten-year effort first undertaken by the New Zealand Labor Party and recently revived by Australia's Labor government. It represents a compromise among a diverse group of nations, from impoverished Niue, with a population of about 4,000, to huge Australia, with close to 16 million people and a per capita income exceeding $10,000. The document prohibits the testing, stationing, storage, acquisition and deployment of nuclear weapons, and the disposal of nuclear wastes in the region's waters.

It does not, however, restrict port visits by nuclear-armed ships. Nor does it bar passage through the zone by nuclear-capable ships and airplanes. Communication and surveillance facilities that are part of the U.S. nuclear-defense network and sales of Australian uranium abroad are permitted. Thus, Australia may provide sites for U.S. missile-tracking facilities on its territory or permit visits by U.S. Navy ships. Each nation is free to establish its own policy on these matters, so New Zealand may continue its nuclear-ship ban.

Three protocols to the treaty invite Britain, France and the United States to comply with its provisions in the South Pacific territories, and the five nuclear powers are urged not to use or threaten the use of nuclear weapons against parties to the treaty or to conduct tests of weapons in the region. Since the treaty does not restrict any current U.S. nuclear activity in the area, the signatory nations hope that it and the other nuclear powers will comply (save France, which is not expected to accede to the nuclear test-ban provision). If Washington refuses, for whatever reason, its action will be seen here as an endorsement of continued French testing, and could transform the anti-nuclear movement here into an anti-American one.



When New Zealand Prime Minister David Lange's Labor government denied port facilities to the U.S.S. Buchanan last February, Washington retaliated by cutting off military intelligence routinely shared under the provisions of the Anzus security pact and by canceling joint military exercises and the regular meetings of the two countries and Australia. Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger appealed to the New Zealand people to oppose the Labor government, and the State Department has threatened that the United States may no longer consider New Zealand an ally within Anzus if Lange honors his commitment to enact legislation in Parliament to formalize the port ban.

At the heart of the antinuclear movement in the region is the call for a "nuclear-free and independent Pacific." Academic specialists, like Greg Fry of the Strategic Defense Studies Center at the Australian National University, stress that opposition to nuclear weapons is linked to the desire for self-determination. Fry points out that it was antipathy toward atomic tests that united the diverse Pacific countries in the first place. Fueling the movement's opposition is popular anger at the arrogance of the nuclear powers, particularly France, which continues to test in the region despite persistent objections by the South Pacific countries.

As a civil servant in Wellington put it, "New Zealanders don't like being bullied, especially when it is the big boy against the little boy." Commenting on the support for New Zealand's ban on nuclear ships, Helen Clark, a Labor Member of Parliament, remarked that the ship ban had brought back "some pride in being New Zealanders again" and "in having a foreign policy that is indigenous." Observing that New Zealand "needs a more mature relationship with the United States," she suggested that if Washington took into account the aspirations of the South Pacific nations instead of working against them, regional cooperation could be helpful to it.

Members of New Zealand's opposition parties share many of those sentiments. Doug Graham, an M.P. from the conservative National Party, says, "Deep down, people are very frustrated with the lack of progress" in the superpower arms-control negotiations. Most protesters are not Communist-inspired, he believes. Rather, they feel that the nuclear question is the most important issue facing the world. Gary Knapp, an M.P. from the opposition New Zealand Democratic Party, says, "This government has a clear mandate for what it has done" based on a thorough public discussion of the issues. Asked if the Prime Minister is likely to give in to U.S. pressure to rescind the ship ban, Knapp replied, "I can't see how Lange could change position on this issue. He would not survive politically." Reacting to statements by the Reagan Administration on recent antinuclear initiatives in the South Pacific, Knapp spoke for a majority of New Zealanders when he said, "We respect America's heart because we think she means well." But, he cautioned, "we are a small country and very proud."

From Washington's perspective, New Zealand's ban is a threat to a longstanding American policy of neither confirming nor denying the presence of nuclear weapons on U.S.

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ships. Contrary to the official explanation, the purpose is not to conceal information from the enemy. The Russians can tell from the design and mission of U.S. ships (drawing on other intelligence sources as well) which are nuclear-capable and which are not. Rather, the policy is obfuscation, intended to minimize possible domestic political opposition in allied countries to visits by U.S. nuclear ships and aircraft. That objective is especially important in Japan, which has proclaimed its opposition to the introduction of nuclear weapons on its territory.

During a visit to Australia in September, Adm. Gene La Rocque, retired, director of the Center for Defense Information, pointed out that 80 percent of all U.S. Navy vessels routinely carry nuclear weapons, which, in a speech to the National Press Club in Canberra, he called "the conventional weapons of this era." For example, U.S. ships are armed with atomic depth charges for use against Soviet submarines. Given the nuclearization of weaponry, La Rocque argued, the United States and the Soviet Union could never have a conventional war.

In Europe, La Rocque pointed out, the location and destructive capacity of U.S. land-based nuclear weapons are known publicly. Their presence is not viewed as a military secret, whereas nuclear weapons carried by U.S. ships in Asian waters come under the policy of neither confirming nor denying. La Rocque believes the difference is primarily the result of an American effort to circumvent Japan's historic antinuclear policies. Moreover, he reiterated his charges that the United States routinely introduces nuclear weapons into that country [see Walden Bello, Peter Hayes and Lyuba Zarsky, "When Japan Had the Bomb—And Didn't Know It," *The Nation*, August 17/24].

Both La Rocque and Robert O'Neill, director of the International Institute of Strategic Studies, agree that U.S. anxiety about New Zealand's ban is rooted in the fear that a nuclear allergy (known down under as "kiwi fever") might spread to other U.S. allies, especially Japan. Unlike New Zealand, Japan is a foundation stone of the U.S. global nuclear infrastructure, despite its proclaimed antinuclear principles. Thus far, Tokyo seems immune to kiwi fever. Prime Minister Yasuhiro Nakasone, known as the "taboo-buster" because of his success in surmounting political obstacles to the remilitarization of Japan, is moving in the opposite direction from Lange.

The question many people in the South Pacific are asking the United States is, Are you for or against us? In a speech in Washington on September 24, Rawdon Dalrymple, the new Australian Ambassador, told the Reagan Administration, "If you want the South Pacific to become . . . fertile ground for anti-United States, anti-West propaganda and activity . . . then continue with a policy of indifference to what the French are doing there." Describing France's Mururoa tests as "an insult" to the people of the region, who feel a "powerless humiliation and outrage that their ocean . . . should be used as an experimental ground for nuclear weapons," Dalrymple urged the United States "to use your enormous influence" to persuade the French to stop the tests.

French intransigence is radicalizing the South Pacific, and some Australian Foreign Ministry officials fear that the result might be the creation of a Pacific Cuba. Many of the countries of the South Pacific depend on the sea for their livelihood. All are worried about the possible threat to the health of their citizens from continued nuclear testing. People question assurances by the nuclear powers that current procedures for testing weapons and dumping and storing wastes are safe. As a popular slogan here puts it, "If it's so safe, store it in Washington, dump it in Tokyo and test it in Paris!"

People in the region are anxiously awaiting Washington's response to the concerns embodied in the S.P.N.F.Z. treaty. As one Australian official says, "Prime Minister David Hawke's prestige is involved. This treaty is a very important thing for Australia." Hawke took pains to ameliorate potential adverse effects of New Zealand's port ban by negotiating an agreement that does not restrict America's present military activities in the region. For the Reagan Administration to refuse to accede to the protocols and, by implication, continue to support French testing in the region, would be a slap in the face to the Australians—and a clear indication to all South Pacific countries of where the United States stands. □

Chileans

(*Continued From Front Cover*)

tober 30, 1984, that reached proportions of a general strike in Santiago and elsewhere, Pinochet had intensified his repression of the left, as well as permitting almost daily operations by death squad–style gunmen, a new development in Chile.

On March 28 and 29, armed men in civilian clothes abducted three men in Santiago in broad daylight and before several witnesses. The next day the bodies of Manuel Guerrero, José Manuel Parada and Santiago Nattino—a teachers' union leader, a staff member of the Catholic Church's human rights office and an artist, respectively—were found by the road to Santiago's airport. Not only was the manner of their disposal unheard-of in Chile, were members of the banned Communist Party, and although the party does not confirm it, Guerrero and Nattino are known corpses was likewise shocking: they became known as the *degollados* ("those with the slashed throats"). All three were members of the banned Communist Party, and although the party does not confirm it, Guerrero and Nattino are known to have been important leaders.

The murders inspired the kind of behavior that becomes folklore. Roberto Parada, Chile's foremost actor and the father of one of the victims, heard of José Manuel's death

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during the intermission of a play in which he portrays the father of a "disappeared" son; the second act would require him to hold an imaginary conversation with that son. He played the scene to an audience in shock and in tears as the news spread. Although demonstrations were banned under the state of siege, 15,000 people turned the funeral for the three men into a major protest. Even the progovernment newspaper *El Mercurio*, tied to the regime by financial indebtedness as well as by ideology, defied the state-of-siege censorship laws to print a lengthy interview with Parada, including his accusations that the government was responsible. Right-wing figures—like prominent businessman Fernando Léniz, who had refused to believe reports of human rights abuse in Chile—were moved to call the regime immoral and unfit to govern.

The truth has been coming out in pieces, illuminating more than this particular murder case. The government appointed a conservative special investigating judge in hopes of defusing the controversy, but the man it chose, José Cánovas Robles, surprised everyone by pursuing the case with vigor. More surprising still, he received the cooperation of the C.N.I., Chile's secret police, which in practice responds directly to Pinochet. Cánovas soon knew that the perpetrators of the murders were members of the *carabineros*, the militarized police force operating as a semiautonomous commando unit with the blessing of some superiors.

In August, Cánovas released preliminary findings accusing fourteen policemen. The news forced *carabinero* director general César Mendoza—a member of the governing junta since 1973—to resign and provoked a rash of personnel changes in the police corps. The nature of the changes suggests why the C.N.I. had broken ranks to assist Cánovas. The new men in charge of police intelligence are known for their subservience to the army, Pinochet's central power base. It appears that the commando unit and its instigators were perceived as a challenge to C.N.I. hegemony—and thus Pinochet's final authority in matters of intelligence—and that the indictments by Cánovas were used as an opportunity to re-establish army control. Still, new indictments on August 30 made an impact. Cánovas ordered the arrests of two *carabinero* colonels, a major, two other captains and two lower-ranking policemen, and the corps obeyed. In two other political murder cases, in Valparaiso and Concepción, judges were also able to secure arrests.

Twice Cánovas tried to turn his case over to military courts. Both times a military judge refused to accept jurisdiction, arguing that the accused acted as "terrorists" rather than under orders, thus relieving the military of responsibility for their actions. In early October the Supreme Court accepted that argument in giving Cánovas jurisdiction; the killings are to be treated as freelance crimes. Meanwhile Cánovas and another special judge had taken testimony from a notorious secret-police collaborator, Miguel Estay (alias El Fanta), who is believed to have information not only on the triple murder but also on numerous cases of "disappeared" Communists going back to 1976, when he first helped DINA (predecessor of the C.N.I.) to locate and abduct eleven party leaders. Estay's information, along with that of a recently self-confessed DINA agent, Otto Trujillo, may clarify up to one hundred disappearances during the mid-1970s, causing further distress in the armed forces and on the right. Cánovas is expected to release new information shortly. While it is questionable how far the regime will allow the investigation to go, the triple-murder case has changed political assumptions in all camps.

One indirect result has been the National Accord for Transition to Full Democracy, an initiative of Cardinal Juan Francisco Fresno, archbishop of Santiago. Published on August 26, the *acuerdo* is a statement of common goals (as distinct from an organizational or tactical alliance) which for the first time brings most rightist parties into formal opposition. Groups that for years supported Pinochet, like the National Party and the Movement for National Union, joined with Christian Democrats and the Radical, Social Democratic and Christian Left parties and a portion of the Socialist Party (all illegal since 1973) to call for a new democratic order that would consist of, among other things, congressional elections, direct presidential elections, an end to the eight-year-old state of emergency and other states of legal exception, and a reform of the 1980 Constitution. Reflecting the concerns of its more conservative adherents, the *acuerdo* also emphasizes an intent to safeguard private property and to castigate any group using violence.

The *acuerdo*'s supporters call it the greatest blow to Pinochet in twelve years. As Christian Democratic figure Edgardo Beninger told me recently, "This shatters the myth that our alternatives are Pinochet or chaos." Skeptics—including spokesmen for the Communist Party (P.C.), which has not signed the accord—call it a positive development but point out that the document sets no time frame for the return to democracy, does not call specifically for Pinochet's removal and contains ambiguous wording on violent resistance that, in effect, may exclude the P.C.

Both positions have merit; the *acuerdo* has redefined the spectrum of opposition by including the right, but it does not offer a tactical program. Party leaders from Christian Democrat to Communist agree it is a large step, but only a step. The question is, What next? Cardinal Fresno favors a dialogue between the government and the *acuerdo*'s adherents, and to that end he discouraged mass mobilization on the day of protest called for September 4 by the labor movement. But no one listened: thousands demonstrated in various cities, and a slowdown of transport and business brought Santiago to a standstill by afternoon. Nor did Fresno get encouragement from Pinochet, who immediately rejected any talks. Demonstrations continued—on September 11 and October 2, 15 and 30, to cite a few. *Acuerdo* supporters who were in the United States recently, including leftist politician Ricardo Lagos, told me that such mobilization is essential to give the accord political force.

For successful mobilization, the center and the right need the Marxist left—and an allied Socialist Party. This fact has been underscored by the success of the protest on September 4 and on November 5–6, also called by the labor

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movement; in both, Christian Democrats and Marxists cooperated closely. That the Communists have not signed the accord—indeed, that they were not invited to participate in its drafting—does not alter the P.C.'s influence as Chile's second-largest political party and the force behind much labor, student and slum-area activism now in resurgence. However, the party has problems of its own, which are difficult to resolve under conditions of harsh repression. The P.C.'s initial attitude toward the accord was so contradictory that until the last minute it was unclear whether the party would sign. The P.C.'s political line—that the people have the right to use "all forms of struggle" in their own defense—has led to internal disagreements, evident for over a year in the statements of various spokesmen. Some, mostly young militants, support armed actions such as sabotage bombings; others, the apparent majority, emphasize the traditional P.C. policy of mass demonstrations and broad alliances. Jaime Insunza, a top clandestine P.C. leader, recently told *Le Monde* that "we . . . do not support armed struggle," stating that military violence cannot overthrow the dictatorship.

Human rights groups and even centrist politicians say the issue of violence is overblown, that many of the frequent bombings are arranged by C.N.I. and that the P.C.'s far-left wing is stronger on rhetoric than action. In any case, as the chief of civil police recently told *El Mercurio*, the amount of opposition violence in Chile is "infinitesimal." Nevertheless, the existence of the Manuel Rodriguez Patriotic Front, a P.C.-linked sabotage group, remains a point of contention both in and outside the party—and an excuse for those, like the Reagan Administration, who favor a center-right alliance as the vehicle replacing Pinochet and limiting Marxist influence.

The Reagan Administration's analysis of Chile stresses left-wing violence while downplaying state terror. The apotheosis of this approach may be a recently completed human rights report prepared for the United Nations by its new special raporteur on Chile, Fernando Volio, a Costa Rican politician who owes his U.N. post (and, according to Costa Rican sources, his former job as Foreign Minister) to the patronage of the United States. Volio's report is so indulgent of the Pinochet regime, and so insistent on terrorism as the main obstacle to democracy, that Chilean officials have praised it and invited him to continue his work in Chile. He would be the first U.N. investigator to be allowed into the country in eight years.

The Reagan Administration, however, recognizes the regime's isolation. Accordingly, the United States withdrew its vociferously pro-Pinochet Ambassador, James Theberge, and this month replaced him with Harry Barnes, a career diplomat most recently Ambassador to India. Barnes will be one of the most senior U.S. ambassadors in Latin America; his style promises to be smoother, his contacts with the opposition broader, and his role in Chile correspondingly more important than his predecessor's. Having hailed the *acuerdo* as "pragmatic" and "forward-looking," the State Department finally seems ready to accept the opposition, or some of it.

The unknown factor, as always, is the Chilean armed forces. Although the police prosecutions and the *acuerdo* have reportedly caused internal debate, the army in particular remains what Chileans call a *caja negra* ("black box"), from which very little information slips out. And, until Chile is fully mobilized—or comes to a complete standstill—army dissidents are unlikely to move. Like the United States, the military will want to see if the accord is just a piece of paper or a first step toward uniting the 85 percent of the population that, according to recent polls, wants Pinochet out. □

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BOOKS & THE ARTS.

Across the Great Divide

JON WIENER

SLAVERY AND FREEDOM ON THE MIDDLE GROUND: Maryland During the Nineteenth Century. *By Barbara Jeanne Fields. Yale University Press. 268 pp. $27.50.*

Historical studies of individual states seldom provide opportunities for wide-ranging historical interpretation, but in the seemingly unremarkable soil of Maryland, Barbara Fields has found interpretive gold. Slavery was legal in antebellum Maryland, but the state's slave owners had a reputation for moderation compared with their counterparts in the deep South. When the state remained loyal to the Union after Lincoln's election, this moderation seemed to have triumphed.

Fields's book is a case study in the fate of moderation in the nation's bloodiest conflict. The "middle ground" in her title comes from Maryland's geographical and political position: the middle ground, she writes, is a "misty and elusive terrain that occupies . . . a place of honor in the geography of Americans' political ideology." To be moderate is to be reasonable. Maryland's moderation as a slave state was evident in the large number of ex-slaves there who had been freed by their masters. On the eve of the Civil War, it had the largest free black population in the South. In Alabama and Georgia in 1850, 99 percent of blacks were slaves; in Maryland, only 55 percent were. Mississippi had roughly 900 free blacks in 1850; Maryland had 75,000.

This does not mean that free blacks in Maryland achieved the sort of legitimacy they had in Brazil and in the Caribbean slave societies, where they formed a powerful group with its own economy of shopkeepers, small farmers and artisans. Whites were much more numerous throughout the slave South than they were in either Brazil or the Caribbean, and whites in the American South reserved most of those occupations for themselves. As a result, Fields shows, free blacks found themselves in a problematic position. Southern ideology proclaimed that Africans were only suited to slavery; the existence of this free stratum of blacks was thus a challenge to the political and moral coherence of slave society. Slaveholders feared that free blacks would incite slaves to resistance and rebellion, and so state legislators worked at eliminating the free black community by passing laws to make manumission difficult and pressuring free blacks to leave the state. As civil war loomed, slaveholders viewed the large free black population with increasing panic. The state's "moderation" left free blacks in an endangered position by 1860.

Why had Maryland's planters freed so many of their slaves in the first place? Other historians have pointed to the state's proximity to the North and Northern ideas as the source of its slaveholders' moderation. But that hadn't affected blacks in other border states like Missouri and Kentucky, where tiny free black populations were the norm. Fields shows that the decisive factor in Maryland was not moderate ideas and values but rather the decline of tobacco production and its replacement by wheat cultivation. Unlike tobacco, wheat required little labor during its growing season; it was more efficient for wheat growers to hire harvest workers who could be dismissed at the end of the season.

Slaveholders in Maryland also had a reputation for being milder and more benign than elsewhere. It's no surprise that Fields dismantles the image of "moderate" slavery. For one thing, she points out that as wheat replaced tobacco, slaveholders sent their slaves down the river to the cotton belt, where back-breaking labor was the norm. In an attempt to revise this grim picture of slavery, Robert Fogel and Stanley Engerman have argued in *Time on the Cross* that the slave trade's damage to blacks has been exaggerated by historians, who ignored the fact that owners sometimes migrated out of the state along with their slaves, and that they presumably took their moderate standards of slave treatment with them. Fields points out the flaw in this argument: since most Maryland slaveholders held only one slave, slave families were inevitably separated when a master departed taking only one member of the family along.

The small scale of Maryland slaveholding has also been held up as evidence of moderation; on plantations with large numbers of slaves, the personal bond between master and slave was presumably weaker, making for harsher treatment. But small-scale slaveholding posed a special threat to slaves, Fields argues. Slave families with members divided among several small owners must have lived in perpetual anxiety about one another—if a master didn't move, he could die or simply run into financial problems that required selling a slave. Geographical distances that are tiny today posed enormous problems for slave families. Frederick Douglass, Maryland's most famous ex-slave, wrote in his autobiography that the twelve miles that separated him from the farm where his mother lived made the two of them virtual strangers.

Although Lincoln initially maintained that what was at stake in the Civil War was the preservation of the Union, not slavery, slaves knew otherwise. Fields has some wonderful material about black views of the war: "Liberty is what we want and nothing Shorter," one wrote. "We care nothing about the union. we heave been in it Slaves over two hundred And fifty years." From the start slaveholders held a remarkably similar analysis of the situation: the existence of slave property was the real issue in the war.

Fields examines the protracted political process by which slavery was finally abolished in this moderate state. In 1862 Lincoln and Congress offered Federal compensation to "any state which may adopt gradual abolishment of slavery." Maryland's leaders responded with righteous indignation, rejecting the offer. Congress soon declared "forever free of their servitude" slaves of those who had supported secession. Maryland slaves quickly learned what that meant: they could gain their freedom by escaping to free territory and claiming their masters had been disloyal. The risk of getting caught before crossing the state line, however, was great, and was increased if children and elderly relatives accompanied the young and strong. Slave-

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holders knew their strongest weapon in preventing runaways was keeping control of slave children. And Maryland slaveholders were anything but moderate when they caught runaway slaves.

Lincoln's next step was the recruitment of free blacks and then slaves of consenting owners into the Union Army. Fields shows that what effectively ended slavery in Maryland was this military recruitment of blacks. She estimates that at least a third of the state's male slaves served in the Union Army. Their absence from the agricultural labor force required that another system be established.

The State Legislature considered abolition in 1864. Moderation again revealed its true colors as white Marylanders dragged their feet even when the end was obvious. Abolition was passed into law only with the votes of soldiers in the field. (The other border states, Fields points out, had an even more appalling record: Kentuckians continued to litigate over the loss of their slaves in the 1870s, and it took Delaware until the twentieth century to ratify the end of slavery.) The lesson is clear: even the nation's most moderate slaveholding state refused to take any steps toward gradual, compensated emancipation; war was necessary, and even then Maryland's moderates resisted the inevitable.

But what would freedom mean? Here Fields's work is exceptionally strong. As the ex-slaves understood, freedom could not be defined simply as the absence of slavery. Ex-masters had their own view of the meaning of the end of slavery. Old apprenticeship laws allowed former masters to claim the labor of children of former slaves if judges ruled that the parents were not inculcating proper "habits of industry." Fields has dug up evidence of more than 2,500 black children apprenticed in this way between 1864 and 1867. Because ex-slaveholders knew the strength of black family ties, apprenticing children provided planters with a means of compelling the labor of their parents. Another old law resurrected after emancipation permitted judges to sentence blacks convicted of petty crimes to terms of slavery. Blacks were excluded from testifying in court. Only a determined struggle brought a Federal guarantee of equal citizenship, and that was to suffer a century of setbacks before finally being legally established in the 1960s.

Fields is also concerned with the social and economic "freedom" that replaced slavery for blacks. While Northerners assumed that slavery would naturally be replaced by the free market of capitalist society, neither ex-masters nor ex-slaves were prepared at war's end to buy and sell labor power. Former owners, Fields points out, expected deference and obedience from their former slaves; they dragged their feet when it came time to pay their employees and complained that blacks were "disloyal" when they moved on to other jobs. Most of all, they complained that the ex-slaves preferred "idleness" to work.

Fields focuses on this last complaint, refusing to dismiss it as simple racism. She suggests taking the testimony of former slaveholders seriously—which, she points out, is not the same as taking it literally. What seemed to them to be idleness often consisted in freedmen cultivating their own gardens and catching fish, oysters and crabs for their families' consumption. What this means, Fields suggests, is that the freedmen sought to avoid proletarian status by becoming subsistence farmers. They weren't interested in making money. At the time, this attitude was incomprehensible to Northerners who were urging black self-improvement and upward mobility, and it is equally incomprehensible to some economic historians today, especially the followers of Fogel and Engerman, who assume that competitive and acquisitive behavior is an innate human trait rather than part of bourgeois culture.

What did the Civil War accomplish? How significant was the end of slavery? Fields aims her sharpest barbs at historians of the left and right who argue for "continuity." The Fogel and Engerman school sees the South before and after 1865 as two different versions of capitalist society; the war changed the labor market from one in which black slaves were sold to one in which blacks sold their own labor—hardly a revolutionary transformation in their view. Moreover, they argue, the material conditions of slave life may have been superior to those experienced by blacks after the war. Many on the left also argue for continuity on the ground that blacks remained an oppressed and exploited laboring class in a racist society. Without denying the bleakness of blacks' situation in the decades following emancipation, Fields replies to both that "slavery and freedom are incom-

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mensurable qualities, the difference between them an existential matter touching the dignity and worth of human life."

The book, then, examines how blacks and whites "studied their parts for the final confrontation between slavery and freedom; . . . how they rehearsed them in a series of tense encounters; and . . . how they acted those parts when the great moment came." Fields's linking of social history with an analysis of economic and political developments makes her work an exemplary effort in the creation of a new synthesis in American history. □

Throwback

BILL FARRELL

THE CRUCIBLE OF RACE: Black-White Relations in the American South Since Emancipation. *By Joel Williamson. Oxford University Press. 561 pp. $25.*

The past fifteen years have witnessed an extraordinary flowering in the field of Southern history. Drawing on economics, political economy and the new social history, as well as on detailed empirical evidence, scholars have examined elements of Southern life previously ignored and have changed our views of the South. Despite its diversity, this recent work has generally emphasized the complicated interrelationship of race relations, the Southern labor system and the economic and political development of the South.

Joel Williamson, professor of history at the University of North Carolina, has written what purports to be a major reinterpretation of black-white relations after the Civil War. Williamson is the author of two previous works in this area, *After Slavery*, a study of Reconstruction in South Carolina, and *New People*, a book concerning miscegenation and the mulatto experience in America. His background would therefore seem auspicious preparation for this book, which is at the very least humane and well-intentioned. Clearly, many years of work have gone into *The Crucible of Race*, and it has received highly favorable notices from several prominent historians in the field. Nevertheless, the book is a major disappointment.

Concentrating on race relations in the American South during the period between emancipation and 1915, Williamson ignores the recent work in Southern history and the insights it has made available. His book is a throwback to the sort of Southern history written by Wilbur Cash, where ideas hold the center stage. In Williamson's view, the course of Southern race relations can be explained by the development and interplay of three distinct white Southern mentalities: the conservative, liberal and radical. Drawing mostly on contemporary literature and the private papers of the white elite, he develops his case by describing the central gesture of each mentality and presenting biographies of people he considers representative of it. He then surveys the interplay among these mentalities. But what is never clear is whether the ideas described here caused anything. The explanations of causality that are put forward range from fuzzy to nonexistent, nor is there any evidence that the ideas being studied ever spread throughout Southern society.

As Williamson describes them, the conservatives defined the South's ideological norm. Usually upper class, they believed blacks were inferior to whites, but were content to accept them as a permanent part of Southern life as long as they remained "in their place." The liberals, a small and unimportant minority, were optimistic about the future of blacks, believing that their capacities had never been fairly tested. The radicals were the rabid racists who believed blacks were regressing to a state of savagery. In order to protect white "civilization" from black "bestiality," radicals advocated segregating, dominating and islolating blacks until they disappeared.

According to Williamson, radicalism dominated the South from 1889 to 1907. Labeling this era "The Rage of Radicalism," he sees it as intrinsically different from anything that preceded it, a difference demonstrated by its violence. During the 1890s an average of 138 people per year were lynched in the South, 75 percent of them black. Lynchings were not mere hangings that lacked judicial sanction but occasions that frequently involved horrendous torture. Williamson argues that white violence against blacks in the period preceding the Rage of Radicalism was of a different order. Prior to 1889 vengeance against blacks was swift and did not involve torture. This position is, to put it bluntly, ridiculous. A reading of the records of the Freedmen's Bureau for the period 1865-67 or of the testimony before the 1872 Joint Select Committee to Investigate the Ku Klux Klan reveals widespread and systematic torture and brutality against blacks, including castrations, torture-murders and other heinous acts. During Reconstruction there were no special trains to take spectators to these events, as there were later, but that was simply because white terrorists had to worry about the Union Army showing up. Lack of black political power explains lynchings more readily than does Williamson's Rage of Radicalism.

Williamson's discussion of disfranchisement is similarly flawed. He claims that when conservatives disfranchised, they did not do so along strictly racist lines but were willing to allow the best blacks to vote while disfranchising the worst whites. "On the other side," he writes, "Radicals drove to disfranchise all black men and enfranchise all white men." Yet "Pitchfork" Ben Tillman, Williamson's archetypal radical politician, disfranchised both poor whites and blacks in South Carolina. In his definitive study of disfranchisement in the post-Reconstruction South, *The Shaping of Southern Politics*, J. Morgan Kousser clearly demonstrates that lower-class whites as well as blacks were targets of the disfranchisers, who were invariably upper-class white Democrats, in each ex-Confederate state. Poor white districts often offered the strongest resistance to disfranchisement, which usually followed a lower class, and often interracial, political insurgency.

Williamson's view of segregation is also highly questionable. He argues that as separate facilities were more expensive, businesses with unsegregated facilities actually resisted segregation as long as possible. This is not the first time this notion has been advanced, and while it may be true, it was not uniformly so. For example, Birmingham was the most industrialized city in the South and also the most segregated. There is

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an impressive body of work which suggests that segregation subsidized business by encouraging the development of a segmented labor market.

There are other respects in which Williamson's interpretation lacks explanatory power. Central to and typical of his analysis of the reign of radicalism is his discussion of the life and ideas of Thomas Dixon, the author of racist novels such as *The Clansman*, later the basis for the film *The Birth of a Nation*. Williamson uses Dixon as a touchstone, and his examination of the man is intended as a mechanism for explaining the spread of radical ideas throughout white Southern society. The point here is that Williamson believes that racism is a psychological problem, a mental condition. Dixon, he writes, left clear evidence of a "psychic plight that made him a racial Radical, and that condition is representative of the psychic plight of several million contemporary white Southerners."

Williamson presents two central components of Dixon's psychological history. First, the man was obsessed by the story of his mother's difficult pregnancy with him (she had to be transported across the Confederacy while pregnant to avoid the advancing Union Army). Second, he was unable to rid himself of the belief, probably true, that his mother had been sexually violated as a child (she married Dixon's father at 13). Unwilling or unable to blame his father for his mother's ill use, Dixon became fixated on the figure of the black man as rapist. Reserving judgment on the merits of Williamson's explication as psychological and literary analysis, it still tells us nothing about the South. It seems unlikely that a significant number of white Southerners were transported across the Confederacy while still in the womb, or that many of their mothers were violated sexually at an early age.

Following his analysis of Dixon, Williamson advances a second hypothesis to explain radicalism's heyday. Here economics is added to the psychological relationship between race and sex. The idea put forth is that white men who had thoroughly absorbed their Victorian role as provider for their wives and children felt threatened when the economic depression of the 1890s made their ability to provide uncertain. As a consequence they began to overemphasize their capabilities as physical protectors of white women. Imagining the black beast as an ever present danger to white women, they brutally punished the beast.

Once again, Williamson provides no evidence that white men felt sexually threatened—he simply asserts it. Furthermore, radicalism's rise and reign does not coincide with an economic depression. There was a depression from 1882 to 1885 and another from 1889 to 1897. According to his chronology, radicalism burst forth four years after the end of one depression and four years prior to another. Reference to the steady decline in farm prices between 1867 and 1897 does not help his case, for it provides no reason why radicalism should have gained sway in 1889 rather than 1867 or 1871.

Both the flimsy economic analysis and the heavy-handed use of psychobiography result in empty social history. In essence, all Williamson has done is to replace Wilbur Cash's *The Mind of the South* with something that might be called *The New and Changing Mind of the South*. As a history of race relations, it is misleading at best, and is sometimes absurd. □

Future Shocked

DEIRDRE LEVINSON

THE GOOD TERRORIST. *By Doris Lessing. Alfred A. Knopf. 375 pp. $16.95.*

For about ten years now the ongoing Marxist left in Britain has been dogged by a species of ideological flotsam, in part its own detritus—young, generally unemployed middle class—drifting under the colors of the left in quest of politics as drama, preferably violent drama. Impervious to the old message of the left and to its long-term objectives, they habitually form mushroom organizations which come up in a night and perish in a night, momentarily allying themselves with whatever issue or slogan comes to hand—the miners' strike, C.N.D., Troops Out of Ireland, Save the Whales. They are the prototype, if any, of the cast of *The Good Terrorist*. It is as such that their political status in the real world needs to be spelled out at once, because this novel relies for its impact on its being specifically located in the political present, in the Britain of Margaret Thatcher's administration.

The Good Terrorist begins with the arrival of Alice, her gay companion, Jasper, in tow, at a London squat, whose sole tenant hitherto has had to resort, in the absence of a functioning flush toilet, to the plastic buckets already cramming more than one room upstairs. With the addition of a vagrant lesbian couple (one of whom is a suicidal psychopath) and an over-compensating heterosexual couple, the squat becomes a stronghold of a recently formed organization called the Communist Centre Union ("Centre," Alice explains, "because we wanted to show we were not left deviants or revisionists").

Yearning for a place she can call home, Alice proceeds to put the trashed house in order, financing this project by burgling her mother's house, then her father's (twice each), and not scrupling either, when her father refuses to guarantee the squat's electricity payments, to heave a rock through his bedroom window. Thus robbing and rock-throwing, repairing and cleaning, up in the rafters fixing the roof, down in the garden digging a sewage pit, Alice slaves away, barely assisted by her squatmates, who are otherwise occupied at the picket of the day, provoking the police and shouting such slogans as "Nuclear missiles, out, out, out." (Note for readers not in the know: Lessing, now a true believer in civil defense in the event of nuclear war, said in a 1982 *New York Times* interview with Lesley Hazleton, "In fact it *is* possible to protect people against everything but a direct hit. The expertise is there.")

Meanwhile, the gray eminence known as Comrade Andrew, sojourning in number 45 squat next door (how a K.G.B. agent comes to be quartered in a squat takes Lessing some strenuous explaining), has also been digging a pit, but in his case to bury only temporarily "something of which," he intimates to Alice, "a very small amount goes a very long way." Though watching with lidless eye for prospective K.G.B. trainees, Comrade Andrew doesn't get far with Alice's lot, succeeding in recruiting only one of their number for Soviet spy school before he departs, "off for more

Deirdre Levinson's novel Modus Vivendi *was recently published in paperback by Viking Penguin.*

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training." This he certainly needs, as becomes apparent when one Jocelin (not hitherto mentioned in the narrative) moves into Alice's squat, bearing, along with her terrorist handbooks, some matériel "purloined . . . on its way through number 45." When their trial run with one of Jocelin's bombs receives scant publicity, the squatmates, "bitter with frustration . . . murderous with the need to impose themselves, prove their power," proceed to wreak vengeance. And so the narrative flounders to its dénouement.

This book may come as a shock to those who remember Lessing as a champion of the radical young. "My generation doesn't understand that young people have penetrated below the surface and have seen the horrors of our civilization," she said on a visit to Stony Brook in 1969. "We've been so damned corrupted. Humanity has gotten worse and worse . . . gets more and more bourgeois. The youth have realized this. . . . To look at the scene today, to see what man has done to himself, is an incitement to young people to riot. I'm surprised that the New Left isn't more violent." Stirring words, if perhaps betokening in their fervidness a compensatory overidentification with flaming youth, devised to ward off the paranoia to come.

Of the cumulative bleak indications of Lessing's direction in the years since then, *The Good Terrorist* is the most chilling. While her animus against the left is now well established, no work of hers to date so exclusively proclaims it. The squatmates, case studies in arrested development and (an indispensable cheap shot) preponderantly disposed to what we are meant to understand as sexual disorders, amount to all the left there is in the Britain of this novel—a Britain in which Margaret Thatcher and her nuclear defense program make no appearance other than as objects of the squatmates' infantile rage.

Theirs is not the only rage identifiable in this book, though. The pervasive contempt in the narrative voice makes it plain that Lessing is angry too, much angrier with them than with their parents—such as Alice's mother, who supports Alice and Jasper (both in their 30s) without demur for four years, then protests, "You're all spoiled rotten. You're rotten"—or with the government, which supports all the squatmates interminably on social security in lieu of paid employment. Such authorial anger holds no brief for a complicated point of view, nor for painstaking, not to say complex, characterization. Indeed, Lessing seems to feel the unscrupulousness of her characters gainsays scrupulous literary treatment, for she so far dispenses with literary considerations as to render this novel altogether devoid of inner coherence. Not only is it frequently impossible to tell what this or that scene tossed into the thickets of the narrative is there for at all, but even when a given scene does have a discernible function, it doesn't fulfill it. At one point, for instance, we are shown Alice assailed by childhood memories of her parents repeatedly requisitioning her room for overnight guests, regardless of her objections. This, coherently and sincerely rendered, could have done something to account for Alice's ensuing immitigable rage. But while it seems to be the intention here to make psychological sense of Alice, the outcome is such a travesty ("Sleeping in her parents' bedroom made her violently emotional, and she could not cope with it") as to advertise the author's indifference to the project.

All this is the more dispiriting because Lessing has evidently been hatching this novel for some time. Alice is made to order on an earlier blueprint. Interested readers should consult the section of *Shikasta*—the first of Lessing's grandiose space fiction series—in which Johor, an emissary from the beneficent higher planet Canopus, reports on eight Shikastans (natives of the area "dominated by governments 'of the left,' which presided over a descent into chaos and misery") who have succumbed to the influence of "the criminal planet" Shammat. "INDIVIDUAL SEVEN (*Terrorist Type 5*)," that's Alice. For further information about this type, Johor refers us to a volume—*The Age of Ideology*, "Pathology of Political Groups"—in the Canopus archives.

For information on Lessing's own pathology we need not seek so far. When Janna Somers, the narrator as well as pseudonymous author of two recent Lessing novels, has her home invaded by her punk niece's mates from the local squat, she sees them as "outriders from the armies of the future"—a view which the reader is not intended to take as a paranoid fantasy. Their kind is also taking over at Janna's place of work: "Henry from Production takes command. He is revolu-

HALVED

for Seamus Heaney

Last night the half moon rose over the Charles
and I thought again how we, too, are halved
by our losses time and time again until we
seem hardly to exist; how our parents, too,
wane from us in halves—first one, and then
the other—until we ourselves are merely
a half-step from our final sleep, half feared,
half welcomed, perhaps, as reprieve from our
own diminishments. But this night it rose,
that luminous moon, over the half-shell
of the boathouse, like a promise half delivered,
like the small, delicate pastry of my childhood
we called a Black-and-White, as if we already knew
the nature of our lives, as if all we hungered for
had already been seen as a half darkness. It
was merely a sliced disc of light, that moon,
against a vast carpet of emptiness, untroubled
by stars. And as I walked across the river
toward the ghostly half-bowl of the empty stadium,
held out like a cupped hand beneath the sky,
I thought of your mother, entirely gone,
and was glad we survive in parts to name
what we have lost, that the same moon will hang
in a half-night over your Irish house; so glad
that penultimate things survive to name the night.

Michael Blumenthal

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tionary . . . his cropped hair . . . is meant to make one think of prison and guerrillas; probably terrorists." Having thus defined "revolutionary," she is nevertheless at pains to expose "reactionary" as a word escaping definition. Janna, in due deference to her creator, doesn't like that word "reactionary." It is one of those words (like, among others, "revisionist," "bourgeois" and "fascist") utilized by the unsleeping Shammat to the undoing of even the agents of Canopus. By such devices Lessing seeks to discredit the *mot juste* for her position these days.

The Good Terrorist has to be taken seriously because it comes from the same hand as *The Golden Notebook*, which—written before her capitulation to Sufism, when, being of the world as well as in it, she encompassed so much of the world—crowns the period ending (ominously, in retrospect) with *The Four-Gated City*. How far Lessing has traveled since that period, *The Good Terrorist*, in its wholesale negation of the large humane intelligence, the honesty of mind and feeling, which informed her engagement then with what she called the great debates of our time, bears sorry witness. But that is not to say she has trodden a downward path all the way in the years between. Though no work she has produced in these years approaches the stature of *The Golden Notebook*, or of *The Four-Gated City* for that matter, her power to confront and render in her fiction the seismic shocks of our time, to enlarge and intensify our consciousness of them, has still made itself felt intermittently. She can still turn out a book—*The Diary of a Good Neighbour* is the most recent example—free of cant (amazingly so, given the deluge of it in the Canopus series). Perhaps *The Good Terrorist* is not, after all, the death rattle of the writer in Lessing, much as it sounds like it. □

The Second Reconstruction

DAVID J. GARROW

REAPING THE WHIRLWIND: The Civil Rights Movement in Tuskegee. *By Robert J. Norrell. Alfred A. Knopf. 254 pp. $19.95.*

RACIAL CHANGE AND COMMUNITY CRISIS: St. Augustine, Florida, 1877–1980. *By David R. Colburn. Columbia University Press. 258 pp. $30.*

IN PURSUIT OF POWER: Southern Blacks and Electoral Politics, 1965–1982. *By Steven F. Lawson. Columbia University Press. 391 pp. $30.*

"Very few studies have examined the civil rights movement at the local level," David Colburn notes in his book on St. Augustine, Florida, a town that experienced black protests and white violence in the mid-1960s. "Even fewer," he adds, "have looked at the effects of the civil rights revolution on race relations after 1965." Colburn's volume and Robert J. Norrell's study of Tuskegee, Alabama, focus on single towns; together with Steven Lawson's examination of Federal Voting Rights Act enforcement in the South since 1965, they offer insights into a subject now no longer fashionable in the media.

As Colburn observes, "There were many small towns which were only slightly affected by the civil rights revolution" in the South, but historians and journalists keep returning to the most famous ones, leaving the story of the South's great social upheaval largely untold. Certainly Norrell's book on Tuskegee is a valuable contribution to that story. Beginning with the interracial compromises of the 1870s and 1880s that led to Booker T. Washington's successful creation of Tuskegee Institute, Norrell skillfully describes the increasing black activism in Tuskegee and surrounding Macon County over the next hundred years.

Washington's philosophy of educational betterment, economic self-help and political quiescence was modified in the mid-1930s by the Tuskegee Institute faculty's firm desire for political participation in Macon County, where only a handful of blacks were registered despite its 80 percent black population. Social science professor Charles G. Gomillion was the key figure in articulating that desire for "civic democracy," and in founding the Tuskegee Civic Association (T.C.A.) in 1941. Along with other dedicated associates such as William P. Mitchell, the Rev. K.L. Buford and Jessie Parkhurst Guzman (whose recent organizational history of the T.C.A., *Crusade for Civic Democracy*, is also useful), Gomillion built the T.C.A. into a model voter registration group which slowly increased black electoral strength in Macon County. Fearful of the growing black electorate, whites tried to retain control of the Tuskegee city government in 1957 by convincing the Alabama State Legislature to gerrymander Tuskegee's boundaries so as to exclude almost all blacks. The T.C.A. called a boycott of white businesses and filed suit against the gerrymander, ultimately winning the case in the Supreme Court. Justice Department and Civil Rights Commission investigators began taking an active interest in Macon County's discriminatory voter registration practices, and T.C.A. activists also began a successful court challenge against the county's segregated schools.

A small band of white liberals worked with the T.C.A. and struggled to maintain white support for public schools, but within the black community there were younger activists who wanted to move beyond the traditional integrationist ideals of the T.C.A. leadership. The protests in nearby Montgomery and Selma in 1965 activated Tuskegee Institute students, and passage of the Voting Rights Act broadened Macon County's electorate to include substantial numbers of poorer rural blacks. The killing of Sammy Younge, a student activist, by a white Tuskegeean in 1966 brought racial tensions to a new peak. Much of the black community mobilized around Lucius Amerson's candidacy for sheriff. Amerson's militant appeals to race and class drew open opposition from T.C.A. leaders. Despite this he became the first black Southern sheriff since Reconstruction, and leaders of Gomillion's generation, disillusioned that the politics of white racial solidarity were being replaced by calls for black racial solidarity, retreated from the field.

In 1972 Tuskegee elected its first black mayor, Johnny L. Ford, who quickly made a name for himself by endorsing Richard Nixon for President and George Wallace for Governor. Ford contended that such actions were

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in Tuskegee's economic self-interest. In 1974 Gomillion, "the person most responsible for bringing change to the community," moved to Washington, D.C., taking with him "many doubts about the success of his almost fifty years of activism." Indeed, Norrell says, "the outcome of the civil rights movement in Macon County had disappointed everyone"—the white conservatives, whose political dominance vanished with the advent of real democracy; the white and black liberals, whose "unrealistic expectations" of interracial harmony and shared power were largely dashed; and the black poor, who learned that economic empowerment did not follow from political rights.

On the other hand, Norrell also contends that Washington's philosophy was vindicated by Tuskegee's evolution and by Johnny Ford's ongoing mayoralty. In a sense, Washington's strategy had worked in Macon County: "a group of blacks who had acquired education and economic independence—largely as a result of Washington's own efforts—carried out a successful movement to gain full political rights," and then learned in the aftermath that while political gains can follow from economic power, political control could not necessarily insure economic betterment.

Colburn agrees that "the Second Reconstruction has yet to provide a quality of life for black citizens that even closely approximates that of whites" in Southern towns such as St. Augustine. The movement there emerged in 1963 through the courageous efforts of a black dentist, Robert B. Hayling, who left the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (and its opposition to direct action protests) and invited Martin Luther King Jr. to bring his Southern Christian Leadership Conference staff to town. Hayling and King's demonstrations dramatized St. Augustine's rigid segregation and unveiled the friendly relationships between local lawmen and the Ku Klux Klan. Only when state highway patrolmen were sent in to take over from local officers did civil rights demonstrators get protection from the crowds of white toughs who ambushed their nighttime protest marches.

Although the white attacks on peaceful protesters drew extensive national news coverage, local white business and political leaders refused to meet Hayling and King's principal demand: creation of a biracial committee to begin a dialogue between St. Augustine's black and white communities. When an opportunity to save face and escape that no-win situation presented itself, King took advantage of it and pulled almost all his staff members out of town, leaving Hayling and other local activists somewhat embittered. The Southern Christian Leadership Conference "left local blacks in a precarious position," Colburn accurately notes. "They failed to develop or encourage a grass roots movement which would provide the black community with leadership and direction following their departure." The lack of such an organized base hindered the political mobilization of St. Augustine's black community in ensuing years, though in time Henry Twine, one of Hayling's closest associates, became an influential member of the city commission.

Over the past fifteen years, the election of black officials, rather than black voter registration gains, has become the common yardstick for measuring black political progress in the South. Steven Lawson's *In Pursuit of Power* emphasizes that the 1965 Voting Rights Act "aroused great expectations that have yet to be fulfilled," and highlights how the impressive-sounding numbers of black elected officials obscure the fact that the percentage of elected black officials in the South is still disproportionately small.

Lawson observes that "the second phase of enfranchisement—the search for a greater share of political representation—has engendered a new round of racial conflict," which has been heightened by the voting rights policies of the Reagan Administration. While the presence of black mayors in such major Southern cities as Atlanta, Birmingham, Charlotte and New Orleans receives a good deal of attention, few people bother to point out that more than twenty Southern counties with black majorities have no black elected officials. Those places receive little journalistic or scholarly attention, nor do the economic ills that almost always accompany such political segregation. "The franchise has been a marginal instrument for black economic advancement," Lawson rightly concludes, and even the election of black officeholders has in many locales had a more symbolic than substantive impact. City councils and county commissions can, if prodded, insure the fair provision of government services and pursue economic development initiatives, but few local governments have the opportunity to effect a redistribution of wealth. Economic change remains the largely untouched progressive agenda for the rural South, an agenda that the right to vote will not insure by itself. As Lawson observes, Southern blacks "still stand on the threshold of political power"; whether they will be able to achieve fairer representation, and cross over into the distant land of economic power, remains to be seen in the years ahead. □

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FILMS.

ANDREW KOPKIND

Compromising Positions
Jagged Edge

My father used to say there were two kinds of doctors. Stand-up doctors had medical degrees, so you stood up to greet them when they entered the room. Sit-down doctors had doctoral degrees of some other kind, but you needn't bother to rise. Dentists were sit-down doctors. I can't think of a movie where a dentist is the romantic lead or even a respectable and sympathetic minor character. Mostly, they are figures of fun (Alan Arkin in *The In-Laws*; Steven Wright in *Desperately Seeking Susan*) or symbols of sadism (Laurence Olivier in *Marathon Man*; the demented driller who obligingly tortures the masochistic Jack Nicholson in *The Little Shop of Horrors*). Dr. Fleckstein, played by Joe Mantegna in *Compromising Positions*, combines both disreputable traditions. He's a ridiculous Long Island Lothario, sporting a prominent pinky ring and flaunt-

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ing gold neck jewelry, who seduces suburban wives strung out on nitrous oxide beneath the chair. But on further examination, he's into s&m. Each of his flings gets her Polaroid taken in stocks or bonds or, in the case of one earth mother, arrayed in produce like a living salad bar in a Korean grocery. So don't bother to get up when Fleckstein walks in.

Just to set you squirming, director Frank Perry begins the movie with a close up of dentistry in motion, and before the suction tubes are removed and the cotton swabs spat out, it's clear that no good will befall Dr. F. In fact, the revenge of the drilled, whipped and scorned is swift and terrible. Within minutes, the dentist gets it in the neck with one of the sharp instruments he employs to slice his patients' gums (Fleckstein is a periodontist, but that's still only a sit-down degree), and the black suburban comedy gets under way.

By convention, whodunits present victims who are either universally loved (Who would want to kill such a wonderful person?) or hated (Who *wouldn't* want to do it?), and Fleckstein is a paradigm of the latter. But a sleazy dentist is only the first of the film's easy, obvious targets. An uptight lawyer, Jewish ritual, barking dogs, dumb cops, a cool detective, salacious suburbanettes and a bored housewife complete the predictable iconography. Susan Sarandon plays the b.h. with her patented eccentric sexiness. Whether she's a budding lesbian vampire (in *The Hunger*) or a smelly shellfishmonger (in *Atlantic City*), Sarandon manages to infuse her characters with intelligence and charm beyond the reasonable expectations of any scriptwriter or director. Here her Judith Singer is a former *Newsday* reporter who gave up what couldn't have been a very promising career to make a home for an uptight lawyer (Edward Herrmann) and their kids on some peaceable North Shore lane. She's one of Fleckstein's patients, and when he gets stuck she plays amateur detective and investigative journalist, not just for the fun of it but also to regain a sliver of the identity she lost in housewifery. Her quest takes her into the arms, but just barely, of the cool detective (Raul Julia), whose own brand of ethnic sexiness is nicely complementary. Together they solve the mystery, but that's not the real point. Mostly, *Compromising Positions* is about décor, attitude and chemistry: the hilarious interiors of Long Island homes, the wacky ways of the housewives, especially Judith Ivey as best friend and Mary Beth Hurt as girl next door, and the subdued intensity of the detective and the reporter.

On the other hand, *Jagged Edge* is only about chemistry. Put Glenn Close in a test tube with Jeff Bridges, shake for a couple of hours and see if you get an explosion. You don't. Close, as a bright and brittle criminal lawyer, and Bridges, as her client, a loose and languid newspaper publisher accused of murdering his wealthy wife, prowl the perimeters of each other's personalities like cat and dog, with about as much in common as two dissimilar carnivores. They fight and love and ride horseback but they never touch G-spots, so to speak. Part of the problem is the plot, which is counterproductive to their chemical reaction, but I don't think it would work in any situation. They are simply not made for each other.

Couple-casting is the starting point for many movies, but nowadays it's done without a good idea of what the outcome will be. The basis for experimentation is to get two semibankable stars in bed and move on to the next one-picture stand. In the old days, when a couple made the earth move, they were allowed longer screen affairs: Gable and Lombard, Astaire and Rogers, Hepburn and Tracy. Now it's a game to see how many combinations and permutations can be concocted for one-picture stands: Redford and Fonda, Fonda and Kristofferson, Kristofferson and Streisand, Streisand and Redford, Redford and Dunaway, Dunaway and Nicholson, Nicholson and Turner, Turner and Douglas, Douglas and Fonda, Fonda and Redford (again), Redford and Newman, Newman and Field, Field and Reynolds, Reynolds and Eastwood, Eastwood and Bujold, Bujold and Carradine, Carradine and Tomlin, Tomlin and Fonda. (Answers next week.) Even when the experiment succeeds and the couple clicks, the Hollywood computer will not let the relationship last but is already printing out the next encounter.

Without the right couple, *Jagged Edge* is still a diverting and unsettling thriller, despite an ending that lacks the necessary twist. Peter Coyote (you would have loved him in *Heartbreakers* had you caught it in its two-day run in a handful of theaters) as the D.A. would have been better as the lead, but so far in the Hollywood sweepstakes

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he's less bankable than a small deposit in a cash machine that is temporarily out of service. □

ART.

ARTHUR C. DANTO

A mathematician I once knew used to take an impish pleasure in pretending not to understand what artists meant by "geometric form." All forms, he tirelessly observed, were indifferently geometric. And he explained, with aggressive patience, the uncontested facts of analytic geometry to the sullen painters in his company. In point of pedantry, he was infuriatingly right. Every point in a plane has a unique pair of real numbers as coordinates, and since every form is a locus of points, any form, however loopy to the eye, can be represented by an equation. No form, accordingly, is especially more geometric than any other so far as algebraic method is concerned. So why especially paint squares and bars and circles when the lush presences of the visible world—young girls, flowers, the surging sea, grazing cows, and dancers at the Bal Tabarin—are no less geometric? Why, in the name of geometry, cut oneself off from the myriad shapes of the world as it is?

The artists before whom he laid these impeccable reasonings were uncomfortable and finally unimpressed, and they were right to be so. It would be perverse to designate the "Last Judgment" of Michelangelo or Turner's "The Slave Ship" as geometric paintings, even if one could point to hidden trapezoids and obvious diagonals. The term "geometry" invokes, in even the most modestly informed, austere scenarios enacted by circles and spheres, by polyhedrons and polygons of unimpeachable regularity, which chastely intersect one another or submit to the bloodless martyrdoms of being cut by planes or inscribed by lines. The entire lore of cones, cubes and cylinders, triangles and pyramids, parallelograms and rhombohedrons had assumed mythic status in Western consciousness long before the introduction of coordinate analysis by Descartes in 1637. The use of pyramids to house the preserved bodies of pharaohs, the fact that the altar of Apollo at Athens had the form of a cube or that the heavens were believed composed of crystalline spheres in harmonic relationship to one another, were not semiotically innocent choices. They were comprehensible in terms of a language of forms which Kepler drew upon only a few decades before Descartes's discovery, when he exulted, alas without foundation, at having found the key to the solar system in the five regular Euclidian solids that marked the spaces between the planets. Only such a geometrically ordered universe would be worthy of a Perfect Designer, Kepler supposed; he was disgusted to discover not long afterward that the planetary orbits were ellipses rather than the circles celestial perfection would recommend.

Confronted by such facts, my friend would raise his circumflex eyebrows in mock surprise. "Oh," he would say through the perfect circle his lips formed on such occasions. "But I thought geometrical art was supposed to be *modern*." And there he would have a point. There truly is a paradox in the fact that once liberated by the possibilities of abstraction from the need for perceptual replication, painters reverted to forms they had learned to construct as schoolchildren with tin compasses and ink-stained rulers. Why should geometric forms carry the cachet of modernism from the first decade of the twentieth century down to the present? Why should postmodernism seem to consist in postgeometricism?

There is no single answer to the first question, since succeeding generations of geometric painters responded to very different artistic imperatives. The Russian Constructivist Aleksandr Rodchenko, for example, programmatically employed geometric forms generated by such instruments as compass and straightedge specifically to obliterate personality. A circle executed by a compass and another executed freehand by an artist with the exquisite reflexes Giotto is said to have possessed might be perfectly congruent, or at least indistinguishable to the unaided eye—but the circumstances of their execution carry an invisible meaning. The submersion of personality, in that overheated period of artistic utopianism in Russia, went with a natural celebration of the community, of the mass, of what anyone with the right tools could draw. Rodchenko meant to present himself as subservient to this. But for Giotto the circle was a signature, almost a gesture of arrogance, declaring that no one but he could have made it.

Consider some further examples. There is a drawing of about 1922 by El Lissitzky showing Rodchenko's great contemporary, Vladimir Tatlin, working on his visionary—and unrealized—Monument to the Third International. Tatlin's face is featureless, but there is a compass protruding from his right eyesocket, his head is framed by a circular arc suspiciously like a halo and he holds a straightedge with the authority of Prospero displaying his staff. The Monument to the Third International rejects figuration as roundly as Rodchenko rejects personality. Tatlin would have been agonized to see the heroized worker-and-soldier monuments that came to dominate the open places of Soviet cities. He instead favored an impersonal ordering of geometric solids almost like that of the universe according to Kepler: the lowest story of his monument was to have been a cube, the second a pyramid, the third a cylinder topped by a hemisphere. The stories were given over to different functions and were to rotate at different velocities; the whole complex was encased in a scaffolding reminiscent of a powerful telescope. It was to be a place not of contemplation but of agitation, and you, as visitor, should "be mechanically taken up, carried away against your will." It was a lesson in submission to forces as overwhelming as social metaphysics could imagine.

The famous "Black Square," shown by Kasimir Malevich in a turbulent exhibition in St. Petersburg in 1915, carries another meaning. That simple shape was dense with the intended erasure of the whole of Western art. It went beyond representation, since it was *in fact* a square, not the representation of one. It went beyond illusion, since it was not in pictorial space but coextensive with the canvas. It was hung across a corner rather than conventionally on a wall, declaring a whole new concept of exhibition. The black could have been a gesture of defiant mourning for the death of all previous art. It was conceived as a radical beginning, and as such conveys an altogether different meaning from any we might ascribe to squares done by Josef Albers or Ad Reinhardt, or by some more recent Minimalist. It was an icon of revolutionary consciousness, not a symbol of artistic distillation.

The Russian Modernists are featured

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in a show of seven decades of geometric abstraction called Contrasts of Form, on view at the Museum of Modern Art until January 7. The exhibition is in acknowledgment of a generous donation to MOMA of the extensive and deep Riklis Collection of the McCrory Corporation. This collection is, according to its curator, Celia Ascher, largely Constructivist in spirit. MOMA has responded by placing it in the format of a chronicle of geometric art from 1910 to 1980, augmenting it with examples of relevant art already in the museum's collection and prefacing the whole with certain Cubist and Futurist works from which the Russians made their severe projections and reductions. I was not happy with the format, nor for that matter with the title, since it is not the forms that contrast so much as the meanings of forms, which may themselves be quite similar. Before offering some arguments for critical disquiet, however, I want to return to the sort of historical concerns that Constructivism and its immediate predecessor, Suprematism, express.

Standing in the gallery where these fragile, small, somewhat empty and faded objects hang in their protective light, looking almost like specimens of tissues preserved for an obscure scientific purpose, I could not but wonder what the casual visitor, unaware of the passionate social and esthetic controversies which brought them into being, might see in them. They were, in effect, the product of an antiesthetic esthetic, a repudiation of beauty and pleasure, of grace and elegance, of suavity and feeling. The traditional values of art were held at bay by works that were almost constituted by the tension of not yielding to them. Painting as it was known was declared obsolete. Inevitably monochrome, deliberately dulled, the little works took on the puritan drabness, the antidecorative utilitarian blankness, of communist architecture and city design—or even costume, as in the blue workclothes of the Chinese. The materials are as consistently countertraditional as possible: a scrap of burlap, some wrapping paper, a bit of tin, some string. This was not in the exuberant spirit of French collage, which inspired Apollinaire to write, "One can paint with whatever one likes, with pipes, postage stamps, postcards or playing cards, candlesticks, pieces of oilcloth, detachable collars, wallpaper, newspapers." Nor was it in the spirit of redeeming base materials for artistic transfiguration, as in the work of Kurt Schwitters. My mathematician friend might, consistent with his position on form, have observed that since any material could be used, why not gold leaf, marble or bronze? And the answer is that it was precisely such materials that had to be rejected as bourgeois: one professed proletarian solidarity by using the simplest of industrial materials to constitute the most mechanical of forms in the most modest compositions on the least prepossessing scales.

Everything that gives these eviscerated objects force and structure is present by exclusion, but it is invisible to the historically uninformed eye. It is a mockery of their intensity of artistic purpose to treat them formalistically, or as exercises in pure design, to be graded by criteria students at the Bauhaus had to meet. It is demeaning to see them as other than allegories of a hopeless revolutionary consciousness, destined to be blown sky-high by forces those who created them could not have anticipated. The galleries here are suffused with the weight of political tragedy and, if you like, artistic exaltation. It is against the doctrinaire condensations of this advanced art that we can, finally, appreciate the early Chagall, whose boisterous colors, vivid fantasy, poetry, wit and opulence constitute a gesture of defiance as flagrant as, say, Marilyn Monroe in full glamorous regalia at a workers' meeting of the hydroelectric plant of Tientsin. In the willed desert of principled Constructivism, Chagall was magnificent.

And this is what bothers me about the exhibition. Only at the most superficial level is there much community between these works and those which, in a formal or material way, influenced them or were influenced by them. The efficient and final causes of history are missing here. The linear chronology dissolves the meaning of geometry by treating the works merely as stages in the steady stream of abstraction. But Mondrian's geometrizing arises out of different passions from Tatlin's, Moholy-Nagy's forms arise out of a different theoretical atmosphere from those of Sol Lewitt, Kandinsky's out of a conception of spirit alien to van Doesburg. The exhibition could only have been illuminating had it broken the continuity and related the impulses to geometry to the different domains of thought that produced them.

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The catalogue, by Magdalena Dabrowski, is immeasurably better than the exhibition it illuminates, just because it does furnish the kind of information the works cry out for. Walking amid the circles, rectangles, grids, diagonals and squares, I felt like Odysseus among the bodiless spooks of the nether world. Odysseus is able to communicate with them only by giving them blood he has brought along for the purpose. The thirsty spirits, momentarily transfused, revert to something like their former vibrant selves. Some of the blood these paintings and constructions so desperately require is furnished by Dabrowski's exemplary text. In the rooms devoted to "The Paris–New York Connection: 1930-1959," filled with paintings that seem robust by comparison with the withered membranes of Constructivist art, it is useful to know that "for the generation of the 1930s, geometric abstraction became a style rather than a philosophy." Had this been printed in large letters on the wall, the differences would have come to life. All modern painting before the 1930s was held erect by philosophical belief defended with nearly religious enthusiasm and intensity. It was the age of manifestoes, and the idea that painting was something one might do independently of a fervent and utopian project was all but unthinkable. In 1925 Mondrian broke with De Stijl because of van Doesburg's insistence on the diagonal. Diagonalists, if I may characterize them thus, differed from Perpendicularists as Catholics differ from Protestants on the topic of Communion. Here is the way van Doesburg preaches the diagonal:

> The purest and, at the same time, the most direct means of expression of the human spirit, which recognizes neither right nor left, neither symmetry, nor statics, nor the exclusively Horizontal-Vertical but is always in revolt, in opposition, to nature.

It is a standard criticism of laboratory science that the world beyond the sterile walls of experimental space is so rich and complex that what is found within them can rarely be projected outward. Such criticism is most convincing in connection with living things, and the injunction to study them ethologically, in their natural atmospheres, becomes more compelling as their behavior becomes more nuanced and reflective. Something like this should be true of works of art as well. It is a premise of formalism that they stand on their own, containing in themselves all the information we require to understand them. An exhibition of geometric abstraction is a crucial test for such views, just because the works seem most amenable to formalistic analysis. But this is an illusion. The current show fails to comply with the simple direction laid down in Celia Ascher's prefatory remark: "Collecting should follow a defined path of exploration and scholarship, rather than the willy-nilly road of the eclectic contemporary." This show, for all its marvelous contents, is willy-nilly eclectic. All a work needs to get in is some sort of geometric credential, plus the right date and place of birth. The curatorial mind is fixated on chronology and influence but blind to the philosophy that animates art and ought to animate its intelligent display.

Riklis believes, rightly, that his collection is "of significant esthetic and educational value." But the esthetic access is blocked by educational negligence, and if it were not for Dabrowski's catalogue, the show would have been a failure. Without it, the scraps and bits of geometry are puzzling and mute—scarcely the bare beauty on which Euclid is said to have looked. □

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M	A	L	I	N	G	E	R		B	A	N	T	A	M
	L		V		I		Y		O		G		N	
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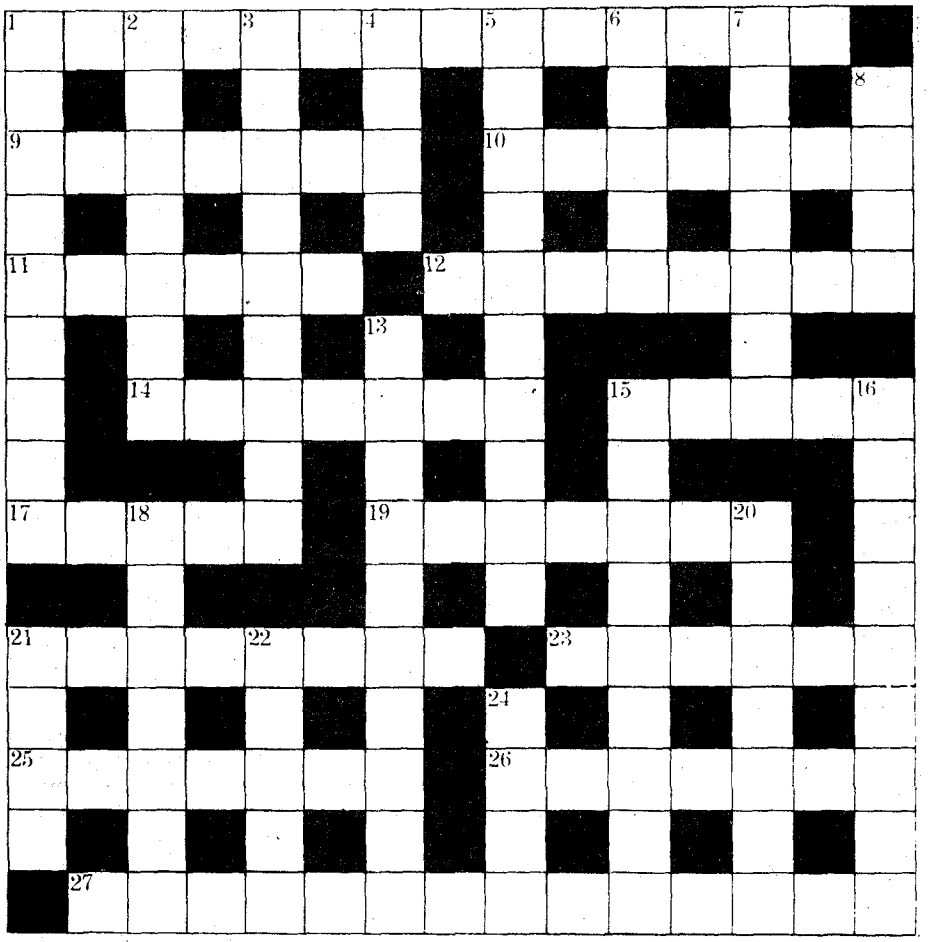
Crossword Puzzle No. 2079

FRANK W. LEWIS



ACROSS

1 and 17 This saw wouldn't be associated with early man. (6,4,4,5)
9 See 24 down
10 Germanium being found in ancient times, one might await things so. (7)
11 Within themselves they are reputedly complicated. (6)
12 What blonds have describes one quality—just! (8)
14 Descriptive of a called strike? (One isn't actually out because of it.) (3-4)
15 They're certainly not bright but might be classically connected with bridge. (5)
17 See 1 across
19 Tiger, in a way, which might be responsible for the "burning bright." (7)
21 Sallying out in significant fashion. (7)
23 It's 150 on the cooker, appropriate for what might be split. (6)
25 Reputedly good-looking containers for seafood, though this implies some problem. (7)
26 Sounds like the sort of threat which was of some use. (7)
27 A complete craft handbook, in a way—of particular interest to those maintaining certain policies. (6,8)

DOWN

1 It offers a good climb for opportunists. (4,5)
2 Those who make fancywork out of rags? (7)
3 At a closer inspection, you might discover one way to rise in the retail business. (9)
4 Tilt and roll, perhaps. (4)
5 Got a hole in your head? Perhaps the ring pin might be responsible. (9)
6 When 19 doesn't get in, it could make this one with stripes. (5)
7 Is atonal music so close? (7)
8 A point implying affirmation, since you are evidently under the ones of Texas. (4)
13 Toss silica around, but not on the right side. (10)
15 You can talk a little—it's always there in case you're upset. (9)
16 Notice it's more quiet around? (Theoretically, one has to perform in the evening.) (9)
18 Obtain something in meat—but that's the nature of the plant. (7)
20 One of those things that dance their wayward round in Wordsworth's "Lucy." (7)
21 Proving the writer is synonymous with drink! (4)
22 Everything with oysters at first is an admixture. (5)
24 and 9 across "Veritas" once might be what the performer wanted to have! (4,7)

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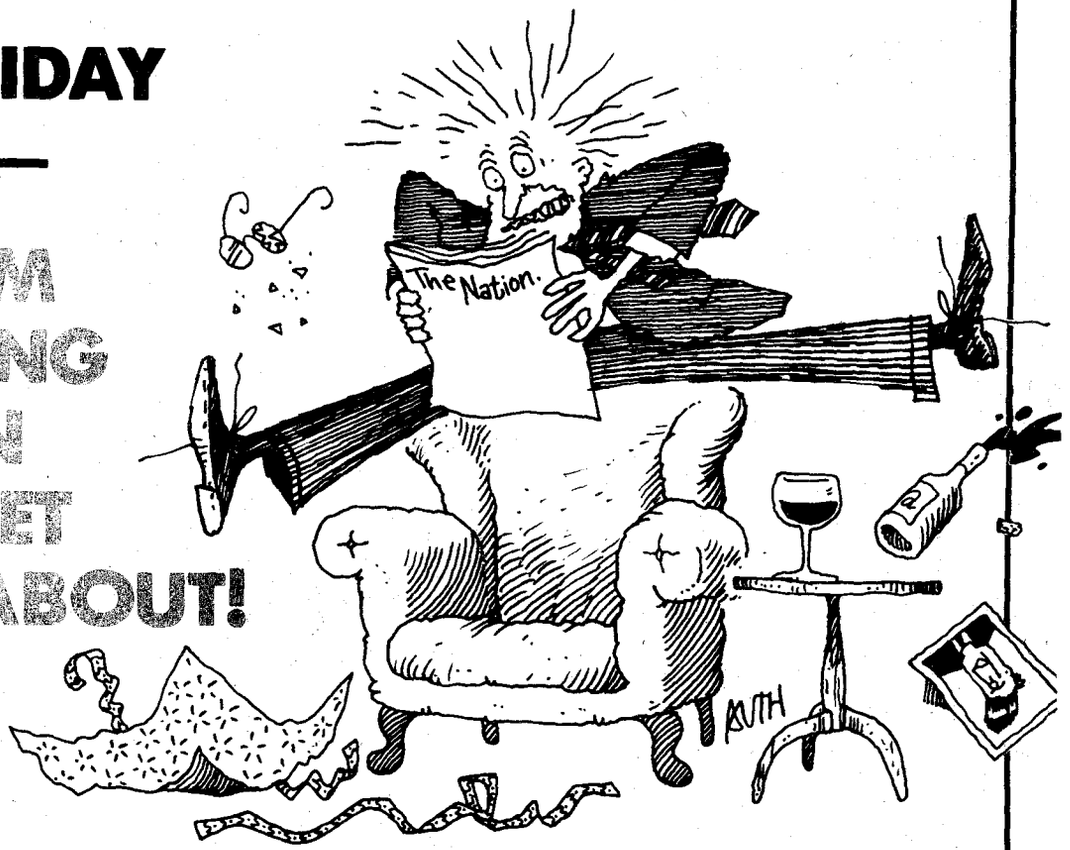

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